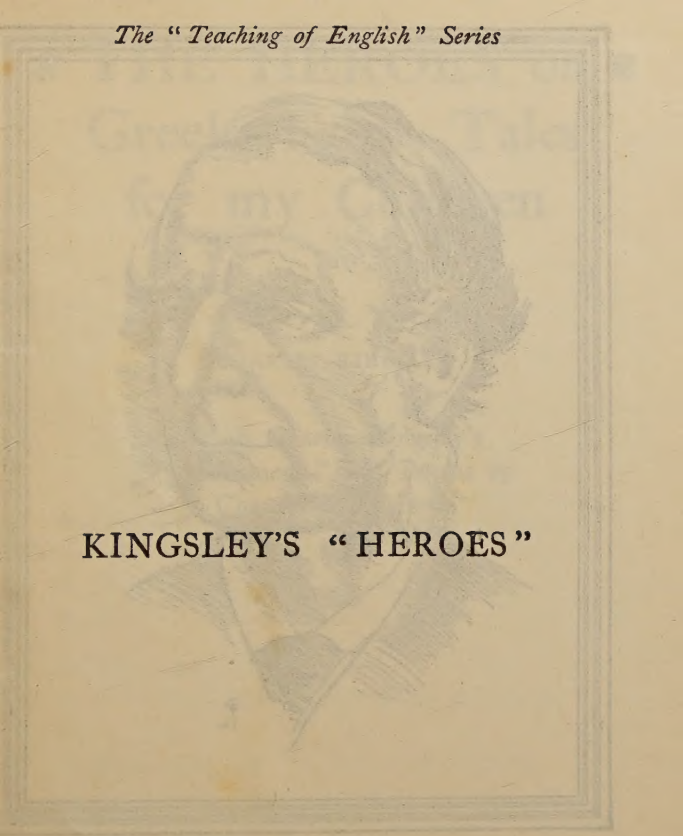
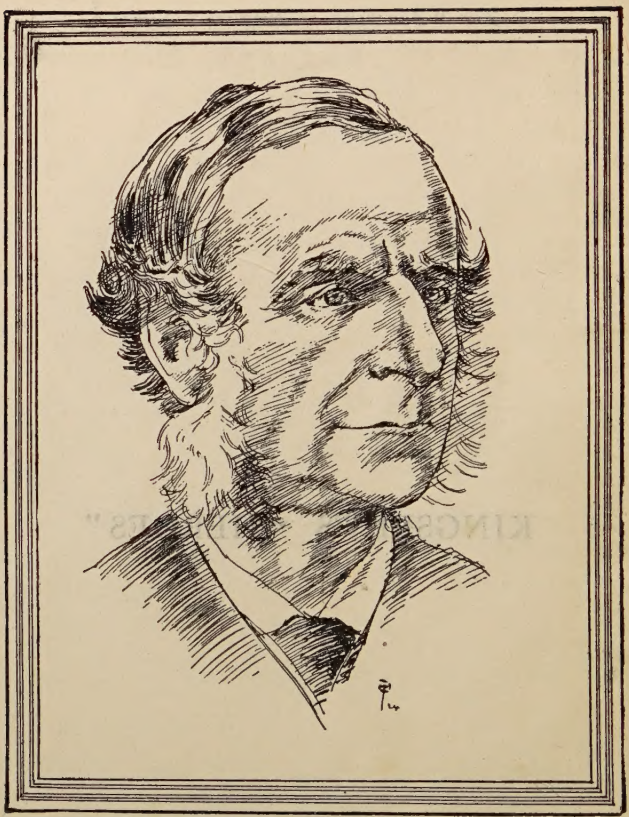



1708


1708



KINGSLEY'S "HEROES"



CHARLES KINGSLEY

From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson

THE HEROES or Greek Fairy Tales for my Children

BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

With Charles Kingsley's
"Andromeda," and Poems by
Chaucer and Morris

THOMAS NELSON & SONS, LTD.
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK

First Edition published May 1925.
Reprinted November 1925; October 1926: January 1928; January 1929; October 1930; October 1932; October 1933

CONTENTS

PREFACE vii

THE HEROES OR GREEK FAIRY TALES
(*Charles Kingsley*)

STORY I.—PERSEUS

I. How Perseus and his Mother came to Seriphos 15
II. How Perseus vowed a rash Vow . . 20
III. How Perseus slew the Gorgon . . 30
IV. How Perseus came to the Æthiops . . 40
V. How Perseus came Home again . . 51

STORY II.—THE ARGONAUTS

I. How the Centaur trained the Heroes on Pelion 56
II. How Jason lost his Sandal in Anauros . 63
III. How they built the ship "Argo" in Iolcos 73
IV. How the Argonauts sailed to Colchis . 77
V. How the Argonauts were driven into the Unknown Sea 101
VI. What was the End of the Heroes . . 124

STORY III.—THESEUS

I. How Theseus lifted the Stone . . . 127

II. How Theseus slew the Devourers of Men 132
III. How Theseus slew the Minotaur . . 156
IV. How Theseus fell by his Pride . . 162

POETICAL SELECTIONS—
Andromeda (*Charles Kingsley*) 165
The Rescue of Andromeda (*William Morris*) 191
The Gorgon's Head (*William Morris*) . . 207
The Sailing of the "Argo" (*William Morris*) . 215
Jason's Tasks (*William Morris*) . . . 220
The Taking of the Fleece (*William Morris*) . 229
The Legend of Ariadne (*Geoffrey Chaucer*) . 242

APPENDIX—
Literary Exercises 252
Pronouncing List of Proper Names . . 255

PREFACE

My dear Children,

Some of you have heard already of the old Greeks; and all of you, as you grow up, will hear more and more of them. Those of you who are boys will, perhaps, spend a great deal of time in reading Greek books; and the girls, though they may not learn Greek, will be sure to come across a great many stories taken from Greek history, and to see, I may say every day, things which we should not have had if it had not been for these old Greeks. You can hardly find a well-written book which has not in it Greek names, and words, and proverbs; you cannot walk through a great town without passing Greek buildings; you cannot go into a well-furnished room without seeing Greek statues and ornaments, even Greek patterns of furniture and paper; so strangely have these old Greeks left their mark behind them upon this modern world in which we now live. And as you grow up, and read more and more, you will find that we owe to these old Greeks the beginnings of all our mathematics and geometry—that is, the science and knowledge of numbers, and of the shapes of things, and of the forces which make things move and stand at rest; and the beginnings of our geography and astronomy; and of our laws, and freedom, and politics—that is, the science of how to rule a country and make it peaceful and strong. And we owe to them, too, the beginning of our logic—that is, the study of words and of reasoning; and of our metaphysics—that is, the

study of our own thoughts and souls. And last of all, they made their language so beautiful that foreigners used to take to it instead of their own; and at last Greek became the common language of educated people all over the world, from Persia and Egypt even to Spain and Britain. And therefore it was that the New Testament was written in Greek, that it might be read and understood by all the nations of the Roman empire; so that, next to the Jews, and the Bible which the Jews handed down to us, we owe more to these old Greeks than to any people upon earth.

Now you must remember one thing—that "Greeks" was not their real name. They called themselves always "Hellens," but the Romans miscalled them Greeks; and we have taken that wrong name from the Romans—it would take a long time to tell you why. They were made up of many tribes and many small separate states; and when you hear in this book of Minuai, and Athenians, and other such names, you must remember that they were all different tribes and peoples of the one great Hellen race, who lived in what we now call Greece, in the islands of the Archipelago, and along the coast of Asia Minor (Ionia, as they call it), from the Hellespont to Rhodes, and had afterwards colonies and cities in Sicily, and South Italy (which was called Great Greece), and along the shores of the Black Sea, at Sinope, and Kertch, and at Sevastopol. And after that again, they spread under Alexander the Great, and conquered Egypt, and Syria, and Persia, and the whole East. But that was many hundred years after my stories; for then there were no Greeks on the Black Sea shores, nor in Sicily, or Italy, or anywhere but in Greece and in Ionia. And if you are puzzled by the names of places in this book, you must take the maps and find them out. It will be a pleasanter way of learning geography than out of a dull lesson-book.

Now, I love these old Hellens heartily ; and I should be very ungrateful to them if I did not, considering all that they have taught me ; and they seem to me like brothers, though they have all been dead and gone many hundred years ago. So as you must learn about them, whether you choose or not, I wish to be the first to introduce you to them, and to say, " Come hither, children, at this blessed Christmas time, when all God's creatures should rejoice together, and bless Him who redeemed them all. Come and see old friends of mine, whom I knew long ere you were born. They are come to visit us at Christmas, out of the world where all live to God ; and to tell you some of their old fairy tales, which they loved when they were young like you."

For nations began at first by being children like you, though they are made up of grown men. They are children at first like you—men and women with children's hearts ; frank, and affectionate, and full of trust, and teachable, and loving to see and learn all the wonders round them ; and greedy also, too often, and passionate and silly, as children are.

Thus these old Greeks were teachable, and learnt from all the nations round. From the Phœnicians they learnt shipbuilding, and some say letters beside ; and from the Assyrians they learnt painting, and carving, and building in wood and stone ; and from the Egyptians they learnt astronomy, and many things which you would not understand. In this they were like our own forefathers the Northmen, of whom you love to hear, who, though they were wild and rough themselves, were humble and glad to learn from every one. Therefore God rewarded these Greeks, as He rewarded our forefathers, and made them wiser than the people who taught them in everything they learnt ; for He loves to see men and children open-hearted, and willing to be taught ; and to him who uses what he has got, He gives more and more day by day. So

these Greeks grew wise and powerful, and wrote poems which will live till the world's end, which you must read for yourselves some day, in English at least, if not in Greek. And they learnt to carve statues, and build temples, which are still among the wonders of the world; and many another wondrous thing God taught them, for which we are the wiser this day.

For you must not fancy, children, that because these old Greeks were heathens, therefore God did not care for them, and taught them nothing.

The Bible tells us that it was not so, but that God's mercy is over all His works, and that He understands the hearts of all people, and fashions all their works. And St. Paul told these old Greeks in after times, when they had grown wicked and fallen low, that they ought to have known better, because they were God's offspring, as their own poets had said; and that the good God had put them where they were, to seek the Lord, and feel after Him, and find Him, though He was not far from any one of them. And Clement of Alexandria, a great Father of the Church, who was as wise as he was good, said that God had sent down Philosophy to the Greeks from heaven, as He sent down the Gospel to the Jews.

For Jesus Christ, remember, is the Light who lights every man who comes into the world. And no one can think a right thought, or feel a right feeling, or understand the real truth of anything in earth and heaven, unless the good Lord Jesus teaches him by His Spirit, which gives man understanding.

But these Greeks, as St. Paul told them, forgot what God had taught them, and, though they were God's offspring, worshipped idols of wood and stone, and fell at last into sin and shame, and then, of course, into cowardice and slavery, till they perished out of that beautiful land which God had given them for so many years.

For, like all nations who have left anything behind them, beside mere mounds of earth, they believed at first in the One True God who made all heaven and earth. But after a while, like all other nations, they began to worship other gods, or rather angels and spirits, who (so they fancied) lived about their land. Zeus, the Father of gods and men (who was some dim remembrance of the blessed true God), and Hera his wife, and Phœbus Apollo the Sun-god, and Pallas Athené who taught men wisdom and useful arts, and Aphrodite the Queen of Beauty, and Poseidon the Ruler of the Sea, and Hephaistos the King of the Fire, who taught men to work in metals. And they honoured the Gods of the Rivers, and the Nymph-maids, who they fancied lived in the caves, and the fountains, and the glens of the forest, and all beautiful wild places. And they honoured the Erinnyes, the dreadful sisters, who, they thought, haunted guilty men until their sins were purged away. And many other dreams they had, which parted the One God into many ; and they said, too, that these gods did things which would be a shame and sin for any man to do. And when their philosophers arose, and told them that God was One, they would not listen, but loved their idols, and their wicked idol feasts, till they all came to ruin. But we will talk of such sad things no more.

But, at the time of which this little book speaks, they had not fallen as low as that. They worshipped no idols, as far as I can find ; and they still believed in the last six of the ten commandments, and knew well what was right and what was wrong. And they believed (and that was what gave them courage) that the gods loved men, and taught them, and that without the gods men were sure to come to ruin. And in that they were right enough, as we know—more right even than they thought ; for without God we can do nothing, and all wisdom comes from Him.

Now, you must not think of them in this book as learned men, living in great cities, such as they were afterwards, when they wrought all their beautiful works, but as country people, living in farms and walled villages, in a simple, hard-working way; so that the greatest kings and heroes cooked their own meals, and thought it no shame, and made their own ships and weapons, and fed and harnessed their own horses; and the queens worked with their maid-servants, and did all the business of the house, and spun, and wove, and embroidered, and made their husbands' clothes and their own. So that a man was honoured among them, not because he happened to be rich, but according to his skill, and his strength, and courage, and the number of things which he could do. For they were but grown-up children, though they were right noble children too; and it was with them as it is now at school—the strongest and cleverest boy, though he be poor, leads all the rest.

Now, while they were young and simple they loved fairy tales, as you do now. All nations do so when they are young: our old forefathers did, and called their stories "Sagas." I will read you some of them some day—some of the Eddas, and the Voluspà, and Beowulf, and the noble old Romances. The old Arabs, again, had their tales, which we now call the "Arabian Nights." The old Romans had theirs, and they called them "Fabulæ," from which our word "fable" comes; but the old Hellens called theirs "Muthoi," from which our new word "myth" is taken. But next to those old Romances, which were written in the Christian Middle Age, there are no fairy tales like these old Greek ones, for beauty and wisdom, and truth, and for making children love noble deeds, and trust in God to help them through.

Now, why have I called this book "The Heroes"? Because that was the name which the Hellens gave to men who were brave and skilful, and dare do more

than other men. At first, I think, that was all it meant: but after a time it came to mean something more; it came to mean men who helped their country; men in those old times, when the country was half-wild, who killed fierce beasts and evil men, and drained swamps, and founded towns, and therefore, after they were dead, were honoured, because they had left their country better than they found it. And we call such a man a hero in English to this day, and call it a "heroic" thing to suffer pain and grief, that we may do good to our fellow-men. We may all do that, my children, boys and girls alike; and we ought to do it, for it is easier now than ever, and safer, and the path more clear. But you shall hear how the Hellens said their heroes worked three thousand years ago. The stories are not all true, of course, nor half of them; you are not simple enough to fancy that; but the meaning of them is true, and true for ever, and that is,—"Do right, and God will help you."

FARLEY COURT,
Advent, 1855.

NOTE.—In the following stories the author uses the Greek instead of the more familiar Latin names for the gods and heroes. Remember that Zeus is Jove or Jupiter, Hera is Juno, Athene is Minerva, Poseidon is Neptune, Aphrodite is Venus, Ares is Mars, Medeia is Medea, Hephaistos is Vulcan, and Hermes is Mercury. In the poetical extracts by William Morris the Latin names are used. See pp. 255–6 for pronunciation of the chief Greek names.

EDITOR'S NOTE

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819–75) wrote *The Water Babies*, *Westward Ho! Hereward the Wake*, and a number of other stories. As you have read, his *Heroes* was written for his children, Rose, Maurice, and Mary, and the book was their Christmas present in the year 1856, when they were living at Eversley, in Hampshire, of which place their father was rector. It is easy to see from the preface on what happy terms father and children lived together. "I wonder," Kingsley used to say, "if there is so much laughing in any other house in England as in ours."

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–96) was a poet who wrote a long poem known as *The Earthly Paradise*, which is divided, like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, into a number of stories, many of which are drawn from the old authors in whose works Kingsley found the stories of his *Heroes*. But the two writers did not always follow the same ancient author, and you will find differences in their stories as you read this book.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340–1400) was the first great English poet, and Morris took him as his master, as you will see later.

THE HEROES

STORY I.—PERSEUS

Part I

HOW PERSEUS AND HIS MOTHER CAME TO SERIPHOS

ONCE upon a time there were two princes who were twins. Their names were Acrisius and Prœtus, and they lived in the pleasant vale of Argos, far away in Hellas. They had fruitful meadows and vineyards, sheep and oxen, great herds of horses feeding down in Lerna Fen, and all that men could need to make them blest; and yet they were wretched, because they were jealous of each other. From the moment they were born they began to quarrel; and when they grew up each tried to take away the other's share of the kingdom, and keep all for himself. So first Acrisius drove out Prœtus; and he went across the seas, and brought home a foreign princess for his wife, and foreign warriors to help him, who were called Cyclopes; and drove out Acrisius in his turn; and then they fought a long while up and down the land, till the quarrel was settled, and Acrisius took Argos and one-half the land, and Prœtus took Tiryns and the other half. And Prœtus and his Cyclopes built

around Tiryns great walls of unhewn stone, which are standing to this day.

But there came a prophet to that hard-hearted Acrisius and prophesied against him, and said, "Because you have risen up against your own blood, your own blood shall rise up against you; because you have sinned against your kindred, by your kindred you shall be punished. Your daughter Danae shall bear a son, and by that son's hands you shall die. So the Gods have ordained, and it will surely come to pass."

And at that Acrisius was very much afraid; but he did not mend his ways. He had been cruel to his own family, and, instead of repenting and being kind to them, he went on to be more cruel than ever: for he shut up his fair daughter Danae in a cavern underground, lined with brass, that no one might come near her. So he fancied himself more cunning than the Gods: but you will see presently whether he was able to escape them.

Now it came to pass that in time Danae bore a son: so beautiful a babe that any but King Acrisius would have had pity on it. But he had no pity; for he took Danae and her babe down to the seashore, and put them into a great chest and thrust them out to sea, for the winds and the waves to carry them whithersoever they would.

The north-west wind blew freshly out of the blue mountains, and down the pleasant vale of Argos, and away and out to sea. And away and out to sea before it floated the mother and her babe, while all who watched them wept, save that cruel father, King Acrisius.

So they floated on and on, and the chest danced up and down upon the billows, and the baby slept upon its mother's breast: but the poor mother could not sleep, but watched and wept, and she sang to her baby as they floated; and the song which she sang you shall learn yourselves some day.

And now they are past the last blue headland, and in the open sea ; and there is nothing round them but the waves, and the sky, and the wind. But the waves are gentle, and the sky is clear, and the breeze is tender and low ; for these are the days when Halcyone and Ceyx build their nests, and no storms ever ruffle the pleasant summer sea.

And who were Halcyone and Ceyx ? You shall hear while the chest floats on. Halcyone was a fairy maiden, the daughter of the beach and of the wind. And she loved a sailor boy, and married him ; and none on earth were so happy as they. But at last Ceyx was wrecked ; and before he could swim to the shore the billows swallowed him up. And Halcyone saw him drowning, and leapt into the sea to him ; but in vain. Then the Immortals took pity on them both, and changed them into two fair sea-birds ; and now they build a floating nest every year, and sail up and down happily for ever upon the pleasant seas of Greece.

So a night passed, and a day, and a long day it was for Danae ; and another night and day beside, till Danae was faint with hunger and weeping, and yet no land appeared. And all the while the babe slept quietly ; and at last poor Danae drooped her head and fell asleep likewise with her cheek against the babe's.

After a while she was awakened suddenly ; for the chest was jarring and grinding, and the air was full of sound. She looked up, and over her head were mighty cliffs, all red in the setting sun, and around her rocks and breakers, and flying flakes of foam. She clasped her hands together, and shrieked aloud for help. And when she cried, help met her : for now there came over the rocks a tall and stately man, and looked down wondering upon poor Danae tossing about in the chest among the waves.

He wore a rough cloak of frieze, and on his head a

broad hat to shade his face ; in his hand he carried a trident for spearing fish, and over his shoulder was a casting-net ; but Danae could see that he was no common man by his stature, and his walk, and his flowing golden hair and beard ; and by the two servants who came behind him, carrying baskets for his fish. But she had hardly time to look at him before he had laid aside his trident and leapt down the rocks, and thrown his casting-net so surely over Danae and the chest, that he drew it, and her, and the baby, safe upon a ledge of rock.

Then the fisherman took Danae by the hand, and lifted her out of the chest, and said,—

" O beautiful damsel, what strange chance has brought you to this island in so frail a ship ? Who are you, and whence ? Surely you are some king's daughter ; and this boy has somewhat more than mortal."

And as he spoke he pointed to the babe ; for its face shone like the morning star.

But Danae only held down her head, and sobbed out,—

" Tell me to what land I have come, unhappy that I am ; and among what men I have fallen ! "

And he said, " This isle is called Seriphos, and I am a Hellen, and dwell in it. I am the brother of Polydectes the king ; and men call me Dictys the netter, because I catch the fish of the shore."

Then Danae fell down at his feet, and embraced his knees and cried,—

" Oh, sir, have pity upon a stranger, whom a cruel doom has driven to your land ; and let me live in your house as a servant ; but treat me honourably, for I was once a king's daughter, and this my boy (as you have truly said) is of no common race. I will not be a charge to you, or eat the bread of idleness ; for I am more skilful in weaving and embroidery than all the maidens of my land."

And she was going on ; but Dictys stopped her, and raised her up, and said,—

" My daughter, I am old, and my hairs are growing grey ; while I have no children to make my home cheerful. Come with me then, and you shall be a daughter to me and to my wife, and this babe shall be our grandchild. For I fear the Gods, and show hospitality to all strangers ; knowing that good deeds, like evil ones, always return to those who do them."

So Danae was comforted, and went home with Dictys the good fisherman, and was a daughter to him and to his wife, till fifteen years were past.

Part II

HOW PERSEUS VOWED A RASH VOW

FIFTEEN years were passed and gone and the babe was now grown to a tall lad and a sailor, and went many voyages after merchandise to the islands round. His mother called him Perseus ; but all the people in Seriphos said that he was not the son of mortal man, and called him Zeus, the son of the king of the Immortals. For though he was but fifteen, he was taller by a head than any man in the island ; and he was the most skilful of all in running and wrestling and boxing, and in throwing the quoit and the javelin, and in rowing with the oar, and in playing on the harp, and in all which befits a man. And he was brave and truthful, gentle and courteous, for good old Dictys had trained him well ; and well it was for Perseus that he had done so. For now Danae and her son fell into great danger, and Perseus had need of all his wit to defend his mother and himself.

I said that Dictys' brother was Polydectes, king of the island. He was not a righteous man, like Dictys ; but greedy, and cunning, and cruel. And when he saw fair Danae, he wanted to marry her. But she would not ; for she did not love him, and cared for no one but her boy, and her boy's father, whom she never hoped to see again. At last Polydectes became furious ; and while Perseus was away at sea he took poor Danae away from Dictys, saying, " If you will not be my wife, you shall be my slave." So Danae

was made a slave, and had to fetch water from the well, and grind in the mill, and perhaps was beaten, and wore a heavy chain, because she would not marry that cruel king. But Perseus was far away, over the seas in the isle of Samos, little thinking how his mother was languishing in grief.

Now one day at Samos, while the ship was lading, Perseus wandered into a pleasant wood to get out of the sun, and sat down on the turf and fell asleep. And as he slept a strange dream came to him—the strangest dream which he had ever had in his life.

There came a lady to him through the wood, taller than he, or any mortal man; but beautiful exceedingly, with grey eyes, clear and piercing, but strangely soft and mild. On her head was a helmet, and in her hand a spear. And over her shoulder, above her long blue robes, hung a goat-skin, which bore up a mighty shield of brass, polished like a mirror. She stood and looked at him with her clear grey eyes; and Perseus saw that her eyelids never moved, nor her eyeballs, but looked straight through and through him, and into his very heart, as if she could see all the secrets of his soul, and knew all that he had ever thought or longed for since the day that he was born. And Perseus dropped his eyes, trembling and blushing, as the wonderful lady spoke.

"Perseus, you must do an errand for me."

"Who are you, lady? And how do you know my name?"

"I am Pallas Athené; and I know the thoughts of all men's hearts, and discern their manhood or their baseness. And from the souls of clay I turn away, and they are blest, but not by me. They fatten at ease, like sheep in the pasture, and eat what they did not sow, like oxen in the stall. They grow and spread, like the gourd along the ground; but, like the gourd, they give no shade to the traveller, and when they are ripe death gathers them, and they go down

unloved into hell, and their name banishes out of the land.

"But to the souls of fire I give more fire, and to those who are manful I give a might more than man's. These are the heroes, the sons of the Immortals, who are blest, but not like the souls of clay. For I drive them forth by strange paths, Perseus, that they may fight the Titans and the monsters, the enemies of Gods and men. Through doubt and need, danger and battle, I drive them; and some of them are slain in the flower of youth, no man knows when or where; and some of them win noble names, and a fair and green old age; but what will be their latter end I know not, and none, save Zeus, the father of Gods and men. Tell me now, Perseus, which of these two sorts of men seem to you more blest?"

Then Perseus answered boldly: "Better to die in the flower of youth, on the chance of winning a noble name, than to live at ease like the sheep, and die unloved and unrenowned."

Then that strange lady laughed, and held up her brazen shield, and cried: "See here, Perseus; dare you face such a monster as this, and slay it, that I may place its head upon this shield?"

And in the mirror of the shield there appeared a face, and as Perseus looked on it his blood ran cold. It was the face of a beautiful woman; but her cheeks were pale as death, and her brows were knit with everlasting pain, and her lips were thin and bitter like a snake's; and instead of hair, vipers wreathed about her temples, and shot out their forked tongues; while round her head were folded wings like an eagle's, and upon her bosom claws of brass.

And Perseus looked awhile, and then said: "If there is anything so fierce and foul on earth, it were a noble deed to kill it. Where can I find the monster?"

Then the strange lady smiled again, and said: "Not yet; you are too young, and too unskilled;

for this is Medusa the Gorgon, the mother of a monstrous brood. Return to your home, and do the work which waits there for you. You must play the man in that before I can think you worthy to go in search of the Gorgon."

Then Perseus would have spoken, but the strange lady vanished, and he awoke; and behold, it was a dream. But day and night Perseus saw before him the face of that dreadful woman, with the vipers writhing round her head.

So he returned home; and when he came to Seriphos, the first thing which he heard was that his mother was a slave in the house of Polydectes.

Grinding his teeth with rage, he went out, and away to the king's palace, and through the men's rooms, and the women's rooms, and so through all the house (for no one dared stop him, so terrible and fair was he) till he found his mother sitting on the floor, turning the stone hand-mill, and weeping as she turned it. And he lifted her up, and kissed her, and bade her follow him forth. But before they could pass out of the room Polydectes came in, raging. And when Perseus saw him, he flew upon him as the mastiff flies on the boar. "Villain and tyrant!" he cried; "is this your respect for the Gods, and your mercy to strangers and widows? You shall die!" And because he had no sword he caught up the stone hand-mill, and lifted it to dash out Polydectes' brains.

But his mother clung to him, shrieking, "Oh, my son, we are strangers and helpless in the land; and if you kill the king, all the people will fall on us, and we shall both die."

Good Dictys, too, who had come in, entreated him. "Remember that he is my brother. Remember how I have brought you up, and trained you as my own son, and spare him for my sake."

Then Perseus lowered his hand; and Polydectes, who had been trembling all this while like a coward,

because he knew that he was in the wrong, let Perseus and his mother pass.

Perseus took his mother to the temple of Athené, and there the priestess made her one of the temple-sweepers ; for there they knew she would be safe, and not even Polydectes would dare to drag her away from the altar. And there Perseus, and the good Dictys, and his wife, came to visit her every day ; while Polydectes, not being able to get what he wanted by force, cast about in his wicked heart how he might get it by cunning.

Now he was sure that he could never get back Danae as long as Perseus was in the island ; so he made a plot to rid himself of him. And first he pretended to have forgiven Perseus, and to have forgotten Danae ; so that, for a while, all went as smoothly as ever.

Next he proclaimed a great feast, and invited to it all the chiefs, and landowners, and the young men of the island, and among them Perseus, that they might all do him homage as their king, and eat of his banquet in his hall.

On the appointed day they all came ; and as the custom was then, each guest brought his present with him to the king : one a horse, another a shawl, or a ring, or a sword ; and those who had nothing better brought a basket of grapes, or of game ; but Perseus brought nothing, for he had nothing to bring, being but a poor sailor-lad.

He was ashamed, however, to go into the king's presence without his gift ; and he was too proud to ask Dictys to lend him one. So he stood at the door sorrowfully, watching the rich men go in ; and his face grew very red as they pointed at him, and smiled, and whispered, " What has that foundling to give ? "

Now this was what Polydectes wanted ; and as soon as he heard that Perseus stood without, he bade them bring him in, and asked him scornfully before them

all, " Am I not your king, Perseus, and have I not invited you to my feast? Where is your present, then? "

Perseus blushed and stammered, while all the proud men round laughed, and some of them began jeering him openly. " This fellow was thrown ashore here like a piece of weed or driftwood, and yet he is too proud to bring a gift to the king."

" And though he does not know who his father is, he is vain enough to let the old women call him the son of Zeus."

And so forth, till poor Perseus grew mad with shame, and hardly knowing what he said, cried out,— " A present! who are you who talk of presents? See if I do not bring a nobler one than all of yours together! "

So he said boasting; and yet he felt in his heart that he was braver than all those scoffers, and more able to do some glorious deed.

" Hear him! Hear the boaster! What is it to be? " cried they all, laughing louder than ever.

Then his dream at Samos came into his mind, and he cried aloud, " The head of the Gorgon."

He was half afraid after he had said the words; for all laughed louder than ever, and Polydectes loudest of all.

" You have promised to bring me the Gorgon's head? Then never appear again in this island without it. Go! "

Perseus ground his teeth with rage, for he saw that he had fallen into a trap; but his promise lay upon him, and he went out without a word.

Down to the cliffs he went, and looked across the broad blue sea; and he wondered if his dream were true, and prayed in the bitterness of his soul:

" Pallas Athené, was my dream true? and shall I slay the Gorgon? If thou didst really show me her face, let me not come to shame as a liar and boastful.

Rashly and angrily I promised ; but cunningly and patiently will I perform."

But there was no answer, nor sign ; neither thunder nor any appearance ; not even a cloud in the sky.

And three times Perseus called weeping, " Rashly and angrily I promised ; but cunningly and patiently will I perform."

Then he saw afar off above the sea a small white cloud, as bright as silver. And it came on, nearer and nearer, till its brightness dazzled his eyes.

Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky ; and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched, it broke, and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athené, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a young man more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.

They looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes ; and they came up the cliffs towards him more swiftly than the sea-gull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir their robes about their limbs ; only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man.

But Athené stood before him and spoke gently, and bid him have no fear. Then,—

" Perseus," she said, " he who overcomes in one trial merits thereby a sharper trial still. You have braved Polydectes, and done manfully. Dare you brave Medusa the Gorgon ? "

And Perseus said, " Try me ; for since you spoke to me in Samos a new soul has come into my breast, and I should be ashamed not to dare anything which I can do. Show me, then, how I can do this ! "

"Perseus," said Athené, "think well before you attempt; for this deed requires a seven years' journey, in which you cannot repent or turn back nor escape; but if your heart fails you, you must die in the Unshapen Land, where no man will ever find your bones."

"Better so than live here, useless and despised," said Perseus. "Tell me, then, oh tell me, fair and wise Goddess, of your great kindness and condescension, how I can do but this one thing, and then, if need be, die!"

Then Athené smiled and said,—

"Be patient, and listen; for if you forget my words, you will indeed die. You must go northward to the country of the Hyperboreans, who live beyond the pole, at the sources of the cold north wind, till you find the three Grey Sisters, who have but one eye and one tooth between them. You must ask them the way to the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star, who dance about the golden tree, in the Atlantic island of the west. They will tell you the way to the Gorgon, that you may slay her, my enemy, the mother of monstrous beasts. Once she was a maiden as beautiful as morn, till in her pride she sinned a sin at which the sun hid his face; and from that day her hair was turned to vipers, and her hands to eagle's claws; and her heart was filled with shame and rage, and her lips with bitter venom; and her eyes became so terrible that whosoever looks on them is turned to stone; and her children are the winged horse and the giant of the golden sword; and her grandchildren are Echidna the witch-adder, and Geryon the three-headed tyrant, who feeds his herds beside the herds of hell. So she became the sister of the Gorgons, the daughters of the Queen of the Sea. Touch them not, for they are immortal; but bring me only Medusa's head."

"And I will bring it!" said Perseus; "but how

am I to escape her eyes? Will she not freeze me too into stone?"

"You shall take this polished shield," said Athené, "and when you come near her look not at her yourself, but at her image in the brass; so you may strike her safely. And when you have struck off her head, wrap it, with your face turned away, in the folds of the goat-skin on which the shield hangs. So you will bring it safely back to me, and win to yourself renown and a place among the heroes who feast with the Immortals upon the peak where no winds blow."

Then Perseus said, "I will go, though I die in going. But how shall I cross the seas without a ship? And who will show me my way? And when I find her, how shall I slay her, if her scales be iron and brass?"

Then the young man spoke: "These sandals of mine will bear you across the seas, and over hill and dale like a bird, as they bear me all day long; for I am Hermes, the far-famed Argus slayer, the messenger of the Immortals who dwell on Olympus."

Then Perseus fell down and worshipped, while the young man spoke again,—

"The sandals themselves will guide you on the road, for they are divine and cannot stray; and this sword itself, the Argus-slayer, will kill her, for it is divine, and needs no second stroke. Arise, and gird them on, and go forth."

So Perseus arose, and girded on the sandals and the sword.

And Athené cried, "Now leap from the cliff and be gone."

But Perseus lingered.

"May I not bid farewell to my mother and to Dictys? And may I not offer burnt-offerings to you, and to Hermes, the far-famed Argus-slayer, and to Father Zeus above?"

"You shall not bid farewell to your mother, lest your heart relent at her weeping. I will comfort her

and Dictys until you return in peace. Nor shall you offer burnt-offerings to the Olympians ; for your offering shall be Medusa's head. Leap, and trust in the armour of the Immortals."

Then Perseus looked down the cliff and shuddered ; but he was ashamed to show his dread. Then he thought of Medusa and the renown before him, and he leapt into the empty air.

And behold, instead of falling he floated, and stood, and ran along the sky. He looked back, but Athené had vanished, and Hermes ; and the sandals led him on northward ever, like a crane who follows the spring toward the Ister fens.

Part III

HOW PERSEUS SLEW THE GORGON

So Perseus started on his journey, going dry-shod over land and sea ; and his heart was high and joyful, for the winged sandals bore him each day a seven days' journey.

And he went by Cythnus, and by Ceos, and the pleasant Cyclades to Attica ; and past Athens and Thebes, and the Copiac lake, and up the vale of Cephisus, and past the peaks of Œta and Pindus, and over the rich Thessalian plains, till the sunny hills of Greece were behind him, and before him were the wilds of the north. Then he passed the Thracian mountains, and many a barbarous tribe, till he came to the Ister stream, and the dreary Scythian plains. And he walked across the Ister dry-shod and away, through the moors and fens, day and night toward the bleak north-west, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, till he came to the Unshapen Land, and the place which has no name.

And seven days he walked through it, on a path which few can tell ; for those who have trodden it like least to speak of it, and those who go there again in dreams are glad enough when they awake ; till he came to the edge of the everlasting night, where the air was full of feathers, and the soil was hard with ice ; and there at last he found the three Grey Sisters, by the shore of the freezing sea, nodding upon a white log of driftwood, beneath the cold white winter moon ;

and they chanted a low song together, " Why the old times were better than the new."

There was no living thing around them, not a fly, not a moss upon the rocks. Neither seal nor sea-gull dare come near, lest the ice should clutch them in its claws. The surge broke up in foam, but it fell again in flakes of snow ; and it frosted the hair of the three Grey Sisters, and the bones in the ice-cliff above their heads. They passed the eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see ; and they passed the tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat ; and they sat in the full glare of the moon, but they were none the warmer for her beams. And Perseus pitied the three Grey Sisters ; but they did not pity themselves.

So he said, " Oh, venerable mothers, wisdom is the daughter of old age. You therefore should know many things. Tell me, if you can, the path to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, " Who is this who reproaches us with old age ? " And another, " This is the voice of one of the children of men."

And he, " I do not reproach, but honour your old age, and I am one of the sons of men and of the heroes. The rulers of Olympus have sent me to you to ask the way to the Gorgon."

Then one, " There are new rulers in Olympus, and all new things are bad." And another, " We hate your rulers, and the heroes, and all the children of men. We are the kindred of the Titans, and the Giants, and the Gorgons, and the ancient monsters of the deep." And another, " Who is this rash and insolent man who pushes unbidden into our world ? " And the first, " There never was such a world as ours, nor will be ; if we let him see it, he will spoil it all."

Then one cried, " Give me the eye, that I may see him ; " and another, " Give me the tooth, that I may bite him." But Perseus, when he saw that they were

foolish and proud, and did not love the children of men, left off pitying them, and said to himself, "Hungry men must needs be hasty; if I stay making many words here, I shall be starved." Then he stepped close to them, and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. And as they groped about between themselves, he held out his own hand gently, till one of them put the eye into it, fancying that it was the hand of her sister. Then he sprang back, and laughed, and cried,—

"Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye; and I will throw it into the sea, unless you tell me the path to the Gorgon, and swear to me that you tell me right."

Then they wept, and chattered, and scolded, but in vain. They were forced to tell the truth, though, when they told it, Perseus could hardly make out the road.

"You must go," they said, "foolish boy, to the southward, into the ugly glare of the sun, till you come to Atlas the Giant, who holds the heaven and the earth apart. And you must ask his daughters, the Hesperides, who are young and foolish like yourself. And now give us back our eye, for we have forgotten all the rest."

So Perseus gave them back their eye; but instead of using it, they nodded and fell fast asleep, and were turned into blocks of ice, till the tide came up and washed them all away. And now they float up and down like icebergs for ever, weeping whenever they meet the sunshine, and the fruitful summer, and the warm south wind, which fill young hearts with joy.

But Perseus leaped away to the southward, leaving the snow and the ice behind: past the isle of the Hyperboreans, and the tin isles, and the long Iberian shore, while the sun rose higher day by day upon a bright blue summer sea. And the terns and the seagulls swept laughing round his head, and called to

him to stop and play, and the dolphins gambolled up as he passed, and offered to carry him on their backs. And all night long the sea nymphs sang sweetly, and the Tritons blew upon their conches, as they played round Galatæa their queen, in her car of pearled shells. Day by day the sun rose higher, and leaped more swiftly into the sea at night, and more swiftly out of the sea at dawn; while Perseus skimmed over the billows like a sea-gull, and his feet were never wetted; and leapt on from wave to wave, and his limbs were never weary, till he saw far away a mighty mountain, all rose-red in the setting sun. Its feet were wrapped in forests, and its head in wreaths of cloud; and Perseus knew that it was Atlas, who holds the heavens and the earth apart.

He came to the mountain, and leapt on shore, and wandered upward, among pleasant valleys and waterfalls, and tall trees and strange ferns and flowers; but there was no smoke rising from any glen, nor house, nor sign of man.

At last he heard sweet voices singing; and he guessed that he was come to the garden of the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star.

They sang like nightingales among the thickets, and Perseus stopped to hear their song; but the words which they spoke he could not understand; no, nor no man after him for many a hundred years. So he stepped forward and saw them dancing, hand in hand around the charmed tree, which bent under its golden fruit; and round the tree-foot was coiled the dragon, old Ladon the sleepless snake, who lies there for ever, listening to the song of the maidens, blinking and watching with dry bright eyes.

Then Perseus stopped, not because he feared the dragon, but because he was bashful before those fair maids; but when they saw him, they too stopped, and called to him with trembling voices,—

"Who are you? Are you Heracles the mighty, who

will come to rob our garden, and carry off our golden fruit?" And he answered,—

"I am not Heracles the mighty, and I want none of your golden fruit. Tell me, fair Nymphs, the way which leads to the Gorgon, that I may go on my way and slay her."

"Not yet, not yet, fair boy; come dance with us around the tree in the garden which knows no winter, the home of the south wind and the sun. Come hither and play with us awhile; we have danced alone here for a thousand years, and our hearts are weary with longing for a playfellow. So come, come, come!"

"I cannot dance with you, fair maidens; for I must do the errand of the Immortals. So tell me the way to the Gorgon, lest I wander and perish in the waves."

Then they sighed and wept; and answered,—

"The Gorgon! she will freeze you into stone."

"It is better to die like a hero than to live like an ox in a stall. The Immortals have lent me weapons, and they will give me wit to use them."

Then they sighed again and answered: "Fair boy, if you are bent on your own ruin, be it so. We know not the way to the Gorgon; but we will ask the giant Atlas, above upon the mountain peak, the brother of our father, the silver Evening Star. He sits aloft and sees across the ocean, and far away into the Unshapen Land."

So they went up the mountain to Atlas their uncle, and Perseus went up with them. And they found the giant kneeling, as he held the heavens and the earth apart.

They asked him, and he answered mildly, pointing to the sea-board with his mighty hand, "I can see the Gorgons lying on an island far away, but this youth can never come near them, unless he has the hat of darkness, which whosoever wears cannot be seen."

Then cried Perseus, "Where is that hat, that I may find it?"

But the giant smiled. "No living mortal can find that hat, for it lies in the depths of Hades, in the regions of the dead. But my nieces are immortal, and they shall fetch it for you, if you will promise me one thing and keep your faith."

Then Perseus promised; and the giant said, "When you come back with the head of Medusa, you shall show me the beautiful horror, that I may lose my feeling and my breathing, and become a stone for ever; for it is weary labour for me to hold the heavens and the earth apart."

Then Perseus promised, and the eldest of the Nymphs went down, and into a dark cavern among the cliffs, out of which came smoke and thunder, for it was one of the mouths of Hell.

And Perseus and the Nymphs sat down seven days, and waited trembling, till the Nymph came up again; and her face was pale, and her eyes dazzled with the light, for she had been long in the dreary darkness; but in her hand was the magic hat.

Then all the Nymphs kissed Perseus, and wept over him a long while; but he was only impatient to be gone. And at last they put the hat upon his head, and he vanished out of their sight.

But Perseus went on boldly, past many an ugly sight, far away into the heart of the Unshapen Land, beyond the streams of Ocean, to the isles where no ship cruises, where is neither night nor day, where nothing is in its right place, and nothing has a name; till he heard the rustle of the Gorgons' wings and saw the glitter of their brazen talons; and then he knew that it was time to halt, lest Medusa should freeze him into stone.

He thought awhile with himself, and remembered Athené's words. He rose aloft into the air, and held the mirror of the shield above his head, and looked

up into it that he might see all that was below him.

And he saw the three Gorgons sleeping, as huge as elephants. He knew that they could not see him, because the hat of darkness hid him; and yet he trembled as he sank down near them, so terrible were those brazen claws.

Two of the Gorgons were foul as swine, and lay sleeping heavily, as swine sleep, with their mighty wings outspread; but Medusa tossed to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed Perseus pitied her, she looked so fair and sad. Her plumage was like the rainbow, and her face was like the face of a nymph, only her eyebrows were knit, and her lips clenched, with everlasting care and pain; and her long neck gleamed so white in the mirror that Perseus had not the heart to strike, and said, "Ah, that it had been either of her sisters!"

But as he looked, from among her tresses the vipers' heads awoke, and peeped up with their bright dry eyes, and showed their fangs, and hissed; and Medusa, as she tossed, threw back her wings and showed her brazen claws; and Perseus saw that, for all her beauty, she was as foul and venomous as the rest.

Then he came down and stepped to her boldly, and looked steadfastly on his mirror, and struck with Herpé stoutly once; and he did not need to strike again.

Then he wrapped the head in the goat-skin, turning away his eyes, and sprang into the air aloft, faster than he ever sprang before.

For Medusa's wings and talons rattled as she sank dead upon the rocks; and her two foul sisters woke, and saw her lying dead.

Into the air they sprang yelling, and looked for him who had done the deed. Thrice they swung round and round, like hawks who beat for a partridge; and



"The hounds of Death are at my heels."

thrice they snuffed round and round, like hounds who draw upon a deer. At last they struck upon the scent of the blood, and they checked for a moment to make sure; and then on they rushed with a fearful howl, while the wind rattled hoarse in their wings.

On they rushed, sweeping and flapping, like eagles after a hare; and Perseus' blood ran cold, for all his courage, as he saw them come howling on his track; and he cried, "Bear me well now, brave sandals, for the hounds of Death are at my heels!"

And well the brave sandals bore him, aloft through cloud and sunshine, across the shoreless sea; and fast followed the hounds of Death, as the roar of their wings came down the wind. But the roar came down fainter and fainter, and the howl of their voices died away; for the sandals were too swift, even for Gorgons, and by nightfall they were far behind, two black specks in the southern sky, till the sun sank and he saw them no more.

Then he came again to Atlas, and the garden of the Nymphs; and when the giant heard him coming, he groaned, and said, "Fulfil thy promise to me." Then Perseus held up to him the Gorgon's head, and he had rest from all his toil; for he became a crag of stone, which sleeps for ever far above the clouds.

Then he thanked the Nymphs, and asked them, "By what road shall I go homeward again, for I have wandered far in coming hither?"

And they wept and cried, "Go home no more, but stay and play with us, the lonely maidens, who dwell for ever far away from Gods and men."

But he refused, and they told him his road, and said, "Take with you this magic fruit, which, if you eat once, you will not hunger for seven days. For you must go eastward and eastward ever, over the doleful Libyan shore, which Poseidon gave to Father Zeus, when he burst open the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and drowned the fair Lectonian land.

And Zeus took that land in exchange, a fair bargain, much bad ground for a little good, and to this day it lies waste and desert, with shingle, and rock, and sand."

Then they kissed Perseus, and wept over him, and he leapt down the mountain, and went on, lessening and lessening like a sea-gull, away and out to sea.

Part IV

HOW PERSEUS CAME TO THE ÆTHIOPS

So Perseus flitted onward to the north-east, over many a league of sea, till he came to the rolling sand-hills and the dreary Libyan shore.

And he flitted on across the desert: over rock-ledges, and banks of shingle, and level wastes of sand, and shell-drifts bleaching in the sunshine, and the skeletons of great sea-monsters, and dead bones of ancient giants, strewn up and down upon the old sea-floor. And as he went the blood-drops fell to the earth from the Gorgon's head, and became poisonous asps and adders, which breed in the desert to this day.

Over the sands he went,—he never knew how far or how long, feeding on the fruit which the Nymphs had given him, till he saw the hills of the Psylli, and the Dwarfs who fought with cranes. Their spears were of reeds and rushes, and their houses of the egg-shells of the cranes; and Perseus laughed, and went his way to the north-east, hoping all day long to see the blue Mediterranean sparkling, that he might fly across it to his home.

But now came down a mighty wind, and swept him back southward toward the desert. All day long he strove against it; but even the winged sandals could not prevail. So he was forced to float down the wind all night; and when the morning dawned there was nothing to be seen, save the same old hateful waste of sand.

And out of the north the sandstorms rushed upon him, blood-red pillars and wreaths, blotting out the noonday sun; and Perseus fled before them, lest he should be choked by the burning dust. At last the gale fell calm, and he tried to go northward again; but again came down the sandstorms, and swept him back into the waste, and then all was calm and cloudless as before. Seven days he strove against the storms, and seven days he was driven back, till he was spent with thirst and hunger, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. Here and there he fancied that he saw a fair lake, and the sunbeams shining on the water; but when he came to it it vanished at his feet, and there was nought but burning sand. And if he had not been of the race of the Immortals, he would have perished in the waste; but his life was strong within him, because it was more than man's.

Then he cried to Athené and said,—

"Oh, fair and pure, if thou hearest me, wilt thou leave me here to die of drought? I have brought thee the Gorgon's head at thy bidding, and hitherto thou hast prospered my journey; dost thou desert me at the last? Else why will not these immortal sandals prevail, even against the desert storms? Shall I never see my mother more, and the blue ripple round Seriphos, and the sunny hills of Hellas?"

So he prayed; and after he had prayed there was a great silence.

The heaven was still above his head, and the sand was still beneath his feet; and Perseus looked up, but there was nothing but the blinding sun in the blinding blue; and round him, but there was nothing but the blinding sand.

And Perseus stood still awhile, and waited, and said, "Surely I am not here without the will of the Immortals, for Athené will not lie. Were not these sandals to lead me in the right road? Then the road

in which I have tried to go must be a wrong road."

Then suddenly his ears were opened, and he heard the sound of running water.

And at that his heart was lifted up, though he scarcely dare believe his ears; and weary as he was, he hurried forward, though he could scarcely stand upright; and within a bowshot of him was a glen in the sand, and marble rocks, and date trees, and a lawn of gay green grass. And through the lawn a streamlet sparkled and wandered out beyond the trees, and vanished in the sand.

The water trickled among the rocks, and a pleasant breeze rustled in the dry date-branches; and Perseus laughed for joy, and leapt down the cliff, and drank of the cool water, and ate of the dates, and slept upon the turf, and leapt up and went forward again; but not toward the north this time; for he said, "Surely Athené hath sent me hither, and will not have me go homeward yet. What if there be another noble deed to be done, before I see the sunny hills of Hellas?"

So he went east, and east for ever, by fresh oases and fountains, date-palms, and lawns of grass, till he saw before him a mighty mountain wall, all rose-red in the setting sun.

Then he towered in the air like an eagle, for his limbs were strong again; and he flew all night across the mountain till the day began to dawn, and rosy-fingered Eos came blushing up the sky. And then, behold, beneath him was the long green garden of Egypt and the shining stream of Nile.

And he saw cities walled up to heaven, and temples, and obelisks, and pyramids, and giant Gods of stone. And he came down amid fields of barley and flax, and millet, and clambering gourds; and saw the people coming out of the gates of a great city, and setting to work, each in his place, among the water-courses, parting the streams among the plants cunningly with

their feet, according to the wisdom of the Egyptians. But when they saw him they all stopped their work, and gathered round him, and cried,—

"Who art thou, fair youth? and what bearest thou beneath thy goat-skin there? Surely thou art one of the Immortals; for thy skin is white like ivory, and ours is red like clay. Thy hair is like threads of gold, and ours is black and curled. Surely thou art one of the Immortals;" and they would have worshipped him then and there; but Perseus said,—

"I am not one of the Immortals; but I am a hero of the Hellens. And I have slain the Gorgon in the wilderness, and bear her head with me. Give me food, therefore, that I may go forward and finish my work."

Then they gave him food, and fruit, and wine; but they would not let him go. And when the news came into the city that the Gorgon was slain, the priests came out to meet him, and the maidens, with songs and dances, and timbrels and harps; and they would have brought him to their temple and to their king; but Perseus put on the hat of darkness, and vanished away out of their sight.

Therefore the Egyptians looked long for his return, but in vain, and worshipped him as a hero, and made a statue of him in Chemmis, which stood for many a hundred years; and they said that he appeared to them at times, with sandals a cubit long; and that whenever he appeared the season was fruitful, and the Nile rose high that year.

Then Perseus went to the eastward, along the Red Sea shore; and then, because he was afraid to go into the Arabian deserts, he turned northward once more, and this time no storm hindered him.

He went past the Isthmus, and Mount Casius, and the vast Serbonian bog, and up the shore of Palestine, where the dark-faced Æthiops dwelt.

He flew on past pleasant hills and valleys, like Argos itself, or Lacedæmon, or the fair Vale of Tempé. But

the lowlands were all drowned by floods, and the highlands blasted by fire, and the hills heaved like a bubbling cauldron, before the wrath of King Poseidon, the shaker of the earth.

And Perseus feared to go inland, but flew along the shore above the sea ; and he went on all the day, and the sky was black with smoke ; and he went on all the night, and the sky was red with flame.

And at the dawn of day he looked toward the cliffs ; and at the water's edge, under a black rock, he saw a white image stand.

" This," thought he, " must surely be the statue of some sea-God ; I will go near and see what kind of Gods these barbarians worship."

So he came near ; but when he came, it was no statue, but a maiden of flesh and blood ; for he could see her tresses streaming in the breeze ; and as he came closer still, he could see how she shrank and shivered when the waves sprinkled her with cold salt spray. Her arms were spread above her head, and fastened to the rock with chains of brass ; and her head dropped on her bosom, either with sleep, or weariness, or grief. But now and then she looked up and wailed, and called her mother ; yet she did not see Perseus, for the cap of darkness was on his head.

Full of pity and indignation, Perseus drew near and looked upon the maid. Her cheeks were darker than his were, and her hair was blue-black like a hyacinth ; but Perseus thought : " I have never seen so beautiful a maiden ; no, not in all our isles. Surely she is a king's daughter. Do barbarians treat their king's daughters thus ? She is too fair, at least, to have done any wrong. I will speak to her."

And, lifting the hat from his head, he flashed into her sight. She shrieked with terror, and tried to hide her face with her hair, for she could not with her hands ; but Perseus cried,—

" Do not fear me, fair one ; I am a Hellen, and no

barbarian. What cruel men have bound you? But first I will set you free."

And he tore at the fetters, but they were too strong for him; while the maiden cried,—

"Touch me not; I am accursed, devoted as a victim to the sea-Gods. They will slay you, if you dare to set me free."

"Let them try," said Perseus; and drawing Herpé from his thigh, he cut through the brass as if it had been flax.

"Now," he said, "you belong to me, and not to these sea-Gods, whosoever they may be!" But she only called the more on her mother.

"Why call on your mother? She can be no mother to have left you here. If a bird is dropped out of the nest, it belongs to the man who picks it up. If a jewel is cast by the wayside, it is his who dare win it and wear it, as I will win you and will wear you. I know now why Pallas Athené sent me hither. She sent me to gain a prize worth all my toil and more."

And he clasped her in his arms, and cried: "Where are these sea-Gods, cruel and unjust, who doom fair maids to death? I carry the weapons of Immortals. Let them measure their strength against mine! But tell me, maiden, who are you, and what dark fate brought you here?"

And she answered, weeping,—

"I am the daughter of Cepheus, King of Iopa, and my mother is Cassiopœia of the beautiful tresses, and they called me Andromeda, as long as life was mine. And I stand bound here, hapless that I am, for the sea-monster's food, to atone for my mother's sin. For she boasted of me once that I was fairer than the Queen of the Fishes; so she in her wrath sent the sea-floods, and her brother the Fire King sent the earthquakes, and wasted all the land, and after the floods a monster bred of the slime who devours all living things. And now he must devour me, guiltless though I am—me

who never harmed a living thing, nor saw a fish upon the shore but I gave it life, and threw it back into the sea ; for in our land we eat no fish, for fear of their queen. Yet the priests say that nothing but my blood can atone for a sin which I never committed."

But Perseus laughed, and said, " A sea-monster ? I have fought with worse than he : I would have faced Immortals for your sake : how much more a beast of the sea ? "

Then Andromeda looked up at him, and new hope was kindled in her breast, so proud and fair did he stand, with one hand round her, and in the other the glittering sword. But she only sighed, and wept the more, and cried,—

" Why will you die, young as you are? Is there not death and sorrow enough in the world already ? It is noble for me to die, that I may save the lives of a whole people ; but you, better than them all, why should I slay you too ? Go you your way ; I must go mine."

But Perseus cried : " Not so ; for the Lords of Olympus, whom I serve, are the friends of the heroes, and help them on to noble deeds. Led by them, I slew the Gorgon, the beautiful horror ; and not without them do I come hither, to slay this monster with that same Gorgon's head. Yet hide your eyes when I leave you, lest the sight of it freeze you too to stone."

But the maiden answered nothing, for she could not believe his words. And then, suddenly looking up, she pointed to the sea, and shrieked,—

"There he comes, with the sunrise, as they promised. I must die now. How shall I endure it ? Oh, go ! Is it not dreadful enough to be torn piecemeal, without having you to look on ? " And she tried to thrust him away.

But he said : " I go ; yet promise me one thing ere I go : that if I slay this beast you will be my wife, and come back with me to my kingdom in fruitful Argos,

for I am a king's heir. Promise me, and seal it with a kiss."

Then she lifted up her face, and kissed him ; and Perseus laughed for joy, and flew upward, while Andromeda crouched trembling on the rock, waiting for what might befall.

On came the great sea-monster, coasting along like a huge black galley, lazily breasting the ripple, and stopping at times by creek or headland to watch for the laughter of girls at their bleaching, or cattle pawing on the sand-hills, or boys bathing on the beach. His great sides were fringed with clustering shells and sea-weeds, and the water gurgled in and out of his wide jaws, as he rolled along, dripping and glistening in the beams of the morning sun.

At last he saw Andromeda, and shot forward to take his prey, while the waves foamed white behind him, and before him the fish fled leaping.

Then down from the height of the air fell Perseus like a shooting star ; down to the crests of the waves, while Andromeda hid her face as he shouted ; and then there was silence for a while.

At last she looked up trembling, and saw Perseus springing toward her ; and instead of the monster a long black rock, with the sea rippling quietly round it.

Who then so proud as Perseus, as he leapt back to the rock, and lifted his fair Andromeda in his arms, and flew with her to the cliff-top, as a falcon carries a dove ?

Who so proud as Perseus, and who so joyful as all the Æthiop people ? For they had stood watching the monster from the cliffs, wailing for the maiden's fate. And already a messenger had gone to Cepheus and Cassiopœia, where they sat in sackcloth and ashes on the ground, in the innermost palace chambers, awaiting their daughter's end. And they came, and all the city with them, to see the wonder, with songs and with dances, with cymbals and harps, and received their daughter back again, as one alive from the dead.

Then Cepheus said, " Hero of the Hellens, stay here with me and be my son-in-law, and I will give you the half of my kingdom."

" I will be your son-in-law," said Perseus, " but of your kingdom I will have none, for I long after the pleasant land of Greece, and my mother who waits for me at home."

Then Cepheus said, " You must not take my daughter away at once, for she is to us like one alive from the dead. Stay with us here a year, and after that you shall return with honour." And Perseus consented ; but before he went to the palace he bade the people bring stones and wood, and built three altars, one to Athené, and one to Hermes, and one to Father Zeus, and offered bullocks and rams.

And some said, " This is a pious man ; " yet the priest said, " The Sea Queen will be yet more fierce against us, because her monster is slain." But they were afraid to speak aloud, for they feared the Gorgon's head. So they went up to the palace ; and when they came in, there stood in the hall Phineus, the brother of Cepheus, chafing like a bear robbed of her whelps, and with him his sons, and his servants, and many an armed man ; and he cried to Cepheus,—

" You shall not marry your daughter to this stranger of whom no one knows even the name. Was not Andromeda betrothed to my son ? And now she is safe again, has he not a right to claim her ? "

But Perseus laughed, and answered : " If your son is in want of a bride, let him save a maiden for himself. As yet he seems but a helpless bridegroom. He left this one to die, and dead she is to him. I saved her alive, and alive she is to me, but to no one else. Ungrateful man ! have I not saved your land, and the lives of your sons and daughters, and will you requite me thus ? Go, or it will be worse for you." But all the men-at-arms drew their swords, and rushed on him like wild beasts.



Then he unveiled the Gorgon's head.

Then he unveiled the Gorgon's head, and said, "This has delivered my bride from one wild beast; it shall deliver her from many." And as he spoke Phineus and all his men-at-arms stopped short, and stiffened each man as he stood; and before Perseus had drawn the goat-skin over the face again, they were all turned into stone.

Then Perseus bade the people bring levers and roll them out; and what was done with them after that I cannot tell.

So they made a great wedding-feast, which lasted seven whole days, and who so happy as Perseus and Andromeda?

But on the eighth night Perseus dreamed a dream; and he saw standing beside him Pallas Athené, as he had seen her in Seriphos, seven long years before; and she stood and called him by name, and said,—

"Perseus, you have played the man, and see, you have your reward. Know now that the Gods are just, and help him who helps himself. Now give me here Herpé the sword, and the sandals, and the hat of darkness, that I may give them back to their owners; but the Gorgon's head you shall keep awhile, for you will need it in your land of Greece. Then you shall lay it up in my temple at Seriphos, that I may wear it on my shield for ever, a terror to the Titans and the monsters, and the foes of Gods and men. And as for this land, I have appeased the sea and the fire, and there shall be no more floods nor earthquakes. But let the people build altars to Father Zeus, and to me, and worship the Immortals, the Lords of heaven and earth."

And Perseus rose to give her the sword, and the cap, and the sandals; but he woke, and his dream vanished away. And yet it was not altogether a dream; for the goat-skin with the head was in its place; but the sword, and the cap, and the sandals were gone, and Perseus never saw them more.

Part V

HOW PERSEUS CAME HOME AGAIN

And when a year was ended Perseus hired Phœnicians from Tyre, and cut down cedars, and built himself a noble galley ; and painted its cheeks with vermilion, and pitched its sides with pitch ; and in it he put Andromeda, and all her dowry of jewels, and rich shawls, and spices from the East ; and great was the weeping when they rowed away. But the remembrance of his brave deed was left behind ; and Andromeda's rock was shown at Iopa in Palestine till more than a thousand years were past.

So Perseus and the Phœnicians rowed to the westward, across the sea of Crete, till they came to the blue Ægean and the pleasant Isles of Hellas, and Seriphos, his ancient home.

Then he left his galley on the beach, and went up as of old ; and he embraced his mother, and Dictys his good foster-father, and they wept over each other a long while, for it was seven years and more since they had met.

Then Perseus went out, and up to the hall of Polydectes ; and underneath the goat-skin he bore the Gorgon's head.

And when he came into the hall, Polydectes sat at the table-head, and all his nobles and land-owners on either side, each according to his rank, feasting on the fish and the goat's flesh, and drinking the blood-red wine. The harpers harped, and the revellers shouted,

and the wine-cups rang merrily as they passed from hand to hand, and great was the noise in the hall of Polydectes.

Then Perseus stood upon the threshold, and called to the king by name. But none of the guests knew Perseus, for he was changed by his long journey. He had gone out a boy, and he was come home a hero; his eye shone like an eagle's, and his beard was like a lion's beard, and he stood up like a wild bull in his pride.

But Polydectes the wicked knew him, and hardened his heart still more; and scornfully he called,—

"Ah, foundling! have you found it more easy to promise than to fulfil?"

"Those whom the Gods help fulfil their promises; and those who despise them, reap as they have sown. Behold the Gorgon's head!"

Then Perseus drew back the goat-skin, and held aloft the Gorgon's head.

Pale grew Polydectes and his guests as they looked upon that dreadful face. They tried to rise up from their seats: but from their seats they never rose, but stiffened, each man where he sat, into a ring of cold grey stones.

Then Perseus turned and left them, and went down to his galley in the bay; and he gave the kingdom to good Dictys, and sailed away with his mother and his bride.

And Polydectes and his guests sat still, with the wine-cups before them on the board, till the rafters crumbled down above their heads, and the walls behind their backs, and the table crumbled down between them, and the grass sprung up about their feet: but Polydectes and his guests sit on the hillside, a ring of grey stones until this day.

But Perseus rowed westward toward Argos, and landed, and went up to the town. And when he came, he found that Acrisius his grandfather had fled. For

Prœtus his wicked brother had made war against him afresh ; and had come across the river from Tiryns, and conquered Argos, and Acrisius had fled to Larissa, in the country of the wild Pelasgi.

Then Perseus called the Argives together, and told them who he was, and all the noble deeds which he had done. And all the nobles and yeomen made him king, for they saw that he had a royal heart ; and they fought with him against Argos, and took it, and killed Prœtus, and made the Cyclopes serve them, and build them walls round Argos, like the walls which they had built at Tiryns ; and there were great rejoicings in the vale of Argos, because they had got a king from Father Zeus.

But Perseus' heart yearned after his grandfather, and he said, " Surely he is my flesh and blood, and he will love me now that I am come home with honour : I will go and find him, and bring him home, and we will reign together in peace."

So Perseus sailed away with his Phœnicians, round Hydrea and Sunium, past Marathon and the Attic shore, and through Euripus, and up the Eubœan sea, till he came to the town of Larissa, where the wild Pelasgi dwelt.

And when he came there, all the people were in the fields, and there was feasting, and all kinds of games ; for Teutamenes their king wished to honour Acrisius, because he was the king of a mighty land.

So Perseus did not tell his name, but went up to the games unknown ; for he said, " If I carry away the prize in the games, my grandfather's heart will be softened toward me."

So he threw off his helmet, and his cuirass, and all his clothes, and stood among the youths of Larissa, while all wondered at him, and said : " Who is this young stranger, who stands like a young bull in his pride ? Surely he is one of the heroes, the sons of the Immortals, from Olympus."

And when the games began, they wondered yet more ; for Perseus was the best man of all at running, and leaping, and wrestling, and throwing the javelin ; and he won four crowns, and took them, and then he said to himself, " There is a fifth crown yet to be won : I will win that, and lay them all upon the knees of my grandfather."

And as he spoke, he saw where Acrisius sat, by the side of Teutamenes the king, with his white beard flowing down upon his knees, and his royal staff in his hand ; and Perseus wept when he looked at him, for his heart yearned after his kin ; and he said, " Surely he is a kingly old man, yet he need not be ashamed of his grandson."

Then he took the quoits and hurled them, five fathoms beyond all the rest ; and the people shouted : " Further yet, brave stranger ! There has never been such a hurler in this land."

Then Perseus put out all his strength, and hurled. But a gust of wind came from the sea, and carried the quoit aside, and far beyond all the rest ; and it fell on the foot of Acrisius, and he swooned away with the pain.

Perseus shrieked, and ran up to him ; but when they lifted the old man up he was dead, for his life was slow and feeble.

Then Perseus rent his clothes, and cast dust upon his head, and wept a long while for his grandfather. At last he rose, and called to all the people aloud, and said,—

" The Gods are true, and what they have ordained must be. I am Perseus, the grandson of this dead man, the far-famed slayer of the Gorgon."

Then he told them how the prophecy had declared that he should kill his grandfather, and all the story of his life.

So they made a great mourning for Acrisius, and burnt him on a right rich pile ; and Perseus went to

the temple, and was purified from the guilt of the death, because he had done it unknowingly.

Then he went home to Argos, and reigned there well with fair Andromeda ; and they had four sons and three daughters, and died in a good old age.

And when they died, the ancients say, Athené took them up into the sky, with Cepheus and Cassiopœia. And there on starlight nights you may see them shining still ; Cepheus with his kingly crown, and Cassiopœia in her ivory chair, plaiting her star-spangled tresses, and Perseus with the Gorgon's head, and fair Andromeda beside him, spreading her long white arms across the heaven, as she stood when chained to the stone for the monster. All night long they shine, for a beacon to wandering sailors ; but all day they feast with the Gods, on the still blue peaks of Olympus

STORY II.—THE ARGONAUTS

Part I

HOW THE CENTAUR TRAINED THE HEROES ON PELION

I HAVE told you of a hero who fought with wild beasts and with wild men : but now I have a tale of heroes who sailed away into a distant land, to win themselves renown for ever, in the adventure of the Golden Fleece.

Whither they sailed, my children, I cannot clearly tell. It all happened long ago ; so long that it has all grown dim, like a dream which you dreamt last year. And why they went I cannot tell : some say that it was to win gold. It may be so ; but the noblest deeds which have been done on earth have not been done for gold.

And what was that first Golden Fleece ? I do not know, nor care. The old Hellens said that it hung in Colchis, which we call the Circassian coast, nailed to a beech tree in the War-god's wood ; and that it was the fleece of the wondrous ram who bore Phrixus and Helle across the Euxine sea. For Phrixus and Helle were the children of the cloud-nymph, and of Athamas the Minuan king. And when a famine came upon the land, their cruel stepmother Ino wished to kill them, that her own children might reign, and said that they must be sacrificed on an altar, to turn away

the anger of the Gods. So the poor children were brought to the altar, and the priest stood ready with his knife, when out of the clouds came the Golden Ram, and took them on his back, and vanished. Then madness came upon that foolish king, Athamas, and ruin upon Ino and her children. For Athamas killed one of them in his fury, and Ino fled from him with the other in her arms, and leapt from a cliff into the sea, and was changed into a dolphin, such as you have seen, which wanders over the waves for ever sighing, with its little one clasped to its breast.

But the people drove out King Athamas, because he had killed his child ; and he roamed about in his misery, till he came to the Oracle in Delphi. And the Oracle told him that he must wander for his sin, till the wild beasts should feast him as their guest. So he went on in hunger and sorrow for many a weary day, till he saw a pack of wolves. The wolves were tearing a sheep ; but when they saw Athamas they fled, and left the sheep for him, and he ate of it ; and then he knew that the Oracle was fulfilled at last. So he wandered no more ; but settled, and built a town, and became a king again.

But the ram carried the two children far away over land and sea, till he came to the Thracian Chersonese, and there Helle fell into the sea. So those narrow straits are called " Hellespont," after her ; and they bear that name until this day.

Then the ram flew on with Phrixus to the north-east across the sea which we call the Black Sea now ; but the Hellens call it Euxine. And at last, they say, he stopped at Colchis, on the steep Circassian coast ; and there Phrixus married Chalciope, the daughter of Aietes the king ; and offered the ram in sacrifice ; and Aietes nailed the ram's fleece to a beech, in the grove of Ares the War-god.

And after a while Phrixus died, and was buried, but his spirit had no rest ; for he was buried far from his

native land, and the pleasant hills of Hellas. So he came in dreams to the heroes of the Minuai, and called sadly by their beds, "Come and set my spirit free, that I may go home to my fathers and to my kinsfolk, and the pleasant Minuan land."

And they asked, "How shall we set your spirit free?"

"You must sail over the sea to Colchis, and bring home the Golden Fleece; and then my spirit will come back with it, and I shall sleep with my fathers and have rest."

He came thus, and called to them often; but when they woke they looked at each other, and said, "Who dare sail to Colchis, or bring home the Golden Fleece?" And in all the country none was brave enough to try it; for the man and the time were not come.

Phrixus had a cousin called Æson, who was king in Iolcos by the sea. There he ruled over the rich Minuan heroes, as Athamas his uncle ruled in Bœotia; and, like Athamas, he was an unhappy man. For he had a stepbrother named Pelias, of whom some said that he was a nymph's son, and there were dark and sad tales about his birth. When he was a babe he was cast out on the mountains, and a wild mare came by and kicked him. But a shepherd passing found the baby, with its face all blackened by the blow; and took him home, and called him Pelias, because his face was bruised and black. And he grew up fierce and lawless, and did many a fearful deed; and at last he drove out Æson his stepbrother, and then his own brother Neleus, and took the kingdom to himself, and ruled over the rich Minuan heroes, in Iolcos by the sea.

And Æson, when he was driven out, went sadly away out of the town, leading his little son by the hand; and he said to himself, "I must hide the child in the mountains; or Pelias will surely kill him, because he is the heir."

So he went up from the sea across the valley,

through the vineyards and the olive groves, and across the torrent of Anauros, toward Pelion the ancient mountain, whose brows are white with snow.

He went up and up into the mountain, over marsh, and crag, and down, till the boy was tired and footsore, and Æson had to bear him in his arms, till he came to the mouth of a lonely cave, at the foot of a mighty cliff.

Above the cliff the snow-wreaths hung, dripping and cracking in the sun ; but at its foot around the cave's mouth grew all fair flowers and herbs, as if in a garden, ranged in order, each sort by itself. There they grew gaily in the sunshine, and the spray of the torrent from above ; while from the cave came the sound of music, and a man's voice singing to the harp.

Then Æson put down the lad, and whispered,—

" Fear not, but go in, and whomsoever you shall find, lay your hands upon his knees and say, " In the name of Zeus, the father of Gods and men, I am your guest from this day forth."

Then the lad went in without trembling, for he too was a hero's son ; but when he was within, he stopped in wonder to listen to that magic song.

And there he saw the singer lying upon bearskins and fragrant boughs : Cheiron, the ancient Centaur, the wisest of all things beneath the sky. Down to the waist he was a man, but below he was a noble horse ; his white hair rolled down over his broad shoulders, and his white beard over his broad brown chest ; and his eyes were wise and mild, and his forehead like a mountain wall.

And in his hands he held a harp of gold, and struck it with a golden key ; and as he struck, he sang till his eyes glittered, and filled all the cave with light.

And he sang of the birth of Time, and of the heavens and the dancing stars ; and of the ocean, and the ether, and the fire, and the shaping of the wondrous earth. And he sang of the treasures of the hills, and

the hidden jewels of the mine, and the veins of fire and metal, and the virtues of all healing herbs, and of the speech of birds, and of prophecy, and of hidden things to come.

Then he sang of health, and strength, and manhood, and a valiant heart ; and of music, and hunting, and wrestling, and all the games which heroes love ; and of travel, and wars, and sieges, and a noble death in fight ; and then he sang of peace and plenty, and of equal justice in the land ; and as he sang the boy listened wide-eyed, and forgot his errand in the song.

And at the last old Cheiron was silent, and called the lad with a soft voice.

And the lad ran trembling to him, and would have laid his hands upon his knees ; but Cheiron smiled, and said, " Call hither your father Æson, for I know you, and all that has befallen, and saw you both afar in the valley, even before you left the town."

Then Æson came in sadly, and Cheiron asked him, " Why camest you not yourself to me, Æson the Æolid ? "

And Æson said,—

" I thought, Cheiron will pity the lad if he sees him come alone ; and I wished to try whether he was fearless, and dare venture like a hero's son. But now I entreat you by Father Zeus, let the boy be your guest till better times, and train him among the sons of the heroes, that he may avenge his father's house."

Then Cheiron smiled, and drew the lad to him, and laid his hand upon his golden locks, and said, " Are you afraid of my horse's hoofs, fair boy, or will you be my pupil from this day ? "

" I would gladly have horse's hoofs, like you, if I could sing such songs as yours."

And Cheiron laughed, and said, " Sit here by me till sundown, when your playfellows will come home, and you shall learn like them to be a king, worthy to rule over gallant men."

Then he turned to Æson, and said: "Go back in peace, and bend before the storm like a prudent man. This boy shall not cross the Anauros again, till he has become a glory to you and to the house of Æolus."

And Æson wept over his son and went away; but the boy did not weep, so full was his fancy of that strange cave, and the Centaur, and his song, and the playfellows whom he was to see.

Then Cheiron put the lyre into his hands, and taught him how to play it, till the sun sank below behind the cliff, and a shout was heard outside.

And then in came the sons of the heroes, Æneas, and Heracles, and Peleus, and many another mighty name.

And great Cheiron leapt up joyfully, and his hoofs made the cave resound, as they shouted, "Come out, Father Cheiron; come out and see our game." And one cried, "I have killed two deer;" and another, "I took a wild cat among the crags;" and Heracles dragged a wild goat after him by its horns, for he was as huge as a mountain crag; and Cæneus carried a bear-cub under each arm, and laughed when they scratched and bit, for neither tooth nor steel could wound him.

And Cheiron praised them all, each according to his deserts.

Only one walked apart and silent, Asclepius, the too-wise child, with his bosom full of herbs and flowers, and round his wrist a spotted snake; he came with downcast eyes to Cheiron, and whispered how he had watched the snake cast its old skin, and grown young again before his eyes, and how he had gone down into a village in the vale, and cured a dying man with an herb which he had seen a sick goat eat.

And Cheiron smiled, and said, "To each Athené and Apollo give some gift, and each is worthy in his place; but to this child they have given an honour beyond all honours, to cure while others kill."

Then the lads brought in wood, and split it, and lighted a blazing fire; and others skinned the deer and quartered them, and set them to roast before the fire; and while the venison was cooking they bathed in the snow-torrent, and washed away the dust and sweat.

And then all ate till they could eat no more (for they had tasted nothing since the dawn), and drank of the clear spring water, for wine is not fit for growing lads. And when the remnants were put away, they all lay down upon the skins and leaves about the fire, and each took the lyre in turn, and sang and played with all his heart.

And after a while they all went out to a plot of grass at the cave's mouth, and there they boxed, and ran, and wrestled, and laughed till the stones fell from the cliffs.

Then Cheiron took his lyre, and all the lads joined hands; and as he played, they danced to his measure, in and out, and round and round. There they danced hand in hand, till the night fell over land and sea, while the black glen shone with their broad white limbs and the gleam of their golden hair.

And the lad danced with them, delighted, and then slept a wholesome sleep, upon fragrant leaves of bay, and myrtle, and marjoram, and flowers of thyme; and rose at the dawn, and bathed in the torrent, and became a schoolfellow to the heroes' sons, and forgot Iolcos, and his father, and all his former life. But he grew strong, and brave, and cunning, upon the pleasant downs of Pelion, in the keen, hungry mountain air. And he learnt to wrestle, and to box, and to hunt, and to play upon the harp; and next he learnt to ride, for old Cheiron used to mount him on his back; and he learnt the virtues of all herbs, and how to cure all wounds; and Cheiron called him Jason the healer, and that is his name until this day.

Part II

HOW JASON LOST HIS SANDAL IN ANAUROS

And ten years came and went, and Jason was grown to be a mighty man. Some of his fellows were gone, and some were growing up by his side. Asclepius was gone into Peloponnese to work his wondrous cures on men; and some say he used to raise the dead to life. And Heracles was gone to Thebes to fulfil those famous labours which have become a proverb among men. And Peleus had married a sea-nymph, and his wedding is famous to this day. And Æneas was gone home to Troy, and many a noble tale you will read of him, and of all the other gallant heroes, the scholars of Cheiron the just. And it happened on a day that Jason stood on the mountain, and looked north and south and east and west; and Cheiron stood by him and watched him, for he knew that the time was come.

And Jason looked and saw the plains of Thessaly, where the Lapithai breed their horses; and the lake of Bœbé, and the stream which runs northward to Peneus and Tempé; and he looked north, and saw the mountain wall which guards the Magnesian shore; Olympus, the seat of the Immortals, and Ossa, and Pelion, where he stood. Then he looked east and saw the bright blue sea, which stretched away for ever toward the dawn. Then he looked south, and saw a pleasant land, with white-walled towns and farms, nestling along the shore of a land-locked bay, while

the smoke rose blue among the trees ; and he knew it for the bay of Pagasai, and the rich lowlands of Hæmonia, and Iolcos by the sea.

Then he sighed, and asked, " Is it true what the heroes tell me—that I am heir of that fair land ? "

" And what good would it be to you, Jason, if you were heir of that fair land ? "

" I would take it and keep it."

" A strong man has taken it and kept it long. Are you stronger than Pelias the terrible ? "

" I can try my strength with his," said Jason ; but Cheiron sighed, and said,—

" You have many a danger to go through before you rule in Iolcos by the sea : many a danger and many a woe ; and strange troubles in strange lands, such as man never saw before."

" The happier I," said Jason, " to see what man never saw before."

And Cheiron sighed again, and said, " The eaglet must leave the nest when it is fledged. Will you go to Iolcos by the sea ? Then promise me two things before you go."

Jason promised, and Cheiron answered, " Speak harshly to no soul whom you may meet, and stand by the word which you shall speak."

Jason wondered why Cheiron asked this of him ; but he knew that the Centaur was a prophet, and saw things long before they came. So he promised, and leapt down the mountain, to take his fortune like a man.

He went down through the arbutus thickets, and across the downs of thyme, till he came to the vine-yard walls, and the pomegranates and the olives in the glen ; and among the olives roared Anauros, all foaming with a summer flood.

And on the bank of Anauros sat a woman, all wrinkled, grey, and old ; her head shook palsied on her breast, and her hands shook palsied on her knees ;

and when she saw Jason, she spoke whining, "Who will carry me across the flood?"

Jason was bold and hasty, and was just going to leap into the flood: and yet he thought twice before he leapt, so loud roared the torrent down, all brown from the mountain rains, and silver-veined with melting snow; while underneath he could hear the boulders rumbling like the tramp of horsemen or the roll of wheels, as they ground along the narrow channel, and shook the rocks on which he stood.

But the old woman whined all the more, "I am weak and old, fair youth. For Hera's sake, carry me over the torrent."

And Jason was going to answer her scornfully, when Cheiron's words came to his mind.

So he said, "For Hera's sake, the Queen of the Immortals on Olympus, I will carry you over the torrent, unless we both are drowned midway."

Then the old dame leapt upon his back, as nimbly as a goat; and Jason staggered in, wondering; and the first step was up to his knees.

The first step was up to his knees, and the second step was up to his waist; and the stones rolled about his feet, and his feet slipped about the stones; so he went on staggering and panting, while the old woman cried from off his back,—

"Fool, you have wet my mantle! Do you make game of poor old souls like me?"

Jason had half a mind to drop her, and let her get through the torrent by herself; but Cheiron's words were in his mind, and he said only, "Patience, mother; the best horse may stumble some day."

At last he staggered to the shore, and set her down upon the bank; and a strong man he needed to have been, or that wild water he never would have crossed.

He lay panting awhile upon the bank, and then leapt up to go upon his journey; but he cast one look

at the old woman, for he thought, " She should thank me once at least."

And as he looked, she grew fairer than all women, and taller than all men on earth ; and her garments shone like the summer sea, and her jewels like the stars of heaven ; and over her forehead was a veil, woven of the golden clouds of sunset ; and through the veil she looked down on him, with great soft heifer's eyes ; with great eyes, mild and awful, which filled all the glen with light.

And Jason fell upon his knees, and hid his face between his hands.

And she spoke : " I am the Queen of Olympus, Hera the wife of Zeus. As thou hast done to me, so will I do to thee. Call on me in the hour of need, and try if the Immortals can forget."

And when Jason looked up, she rose from off the earth, like a pillar of tall white cloud, and floated away across the mountain peaks, toward Olympus the holy hill.

Then a great fear fell on Jason ; but after a while he grew light of heart ; and he blessed old Cheiron, and said, " Surely the Centaur is a prophet, and guessed what would come to pass, when he bade me speak harshly to no soul whom I might meet."

Then he went down toward Iolcos ; and as he walked he found that he had lost one of his sandals in the flood.

And as he went through the streets, the people came out to look at him, so tall and fair was he ; but some of the elders whispered together ; and at last one of them stopped Jason, and called to him, " Fair lad, who are you, and whence come you ; and what is your errand in the town ? "

" My name, good father, is Jason, and I come from Pelion up above ; and my errand is to Pelias your king ; tell me then where his palace is."

But the old man started, and grew pale, and said,



She rose like a pillar of tall white cloud.

"Do you not know the oracle, my son, that you go so boldly through the town with but one sandal on?"

"I am a stranger here, and know of no oracle; but what of my one sandal? I lost the other in Anauros, while I was struggling with the flood."

Then the old man looked back to his companions; and one sighed, and another smiled; at last he said: "I will tell you, lest you rush upon your ruin unawares. The oracle in Delphi has said that a man wearing one sandal should take the kingdom from Pelias, and keep it for himself. Therefore beware how you go up to his palace, for he is the fiercest and most cunning of all kings."

Then Jason laughed a great laugh, like a war-horse in his pride. "Good news, good father, both for you and me. For that very end I came into the town."

Then he strode on toward the palace of Pelias, while all the people wondered at his bearing.

And he stood in the doorway and cried, "Come out, come out, Pelias the valiant, and fight for your kingdom like a man."

Pelias came out wondering, and "Who are you, bold youth?" he cried.

"I am Jason, the son of Æson, the heir of all this land."

Then Pelias lifted up his hands and eyes, and wept, or seemed to weep; and blessed the heavens which had brought his nephew to him, never to leave him more. "For," said he, "I have but three daughters, and no son to be my heir. You shall be my heir then, and rule the kingdom after me, and marry whichsoever of my daughters you shall choose; though a sad kingdom you will find it, and whosoever rules it a miserable man. But come in, come in, and feast."

So he drew Jason in, whether he would or not, and spoke to him so lovingly and feasted him so well, that Jason's anger passed; and after supper his three cousins came into the hall, and Jason thought that

he should like well enough to have one of them for his wife.

But at last he said to Pelias: "Why do you look so sad, my uncle? And what did you mean just now when you said that this was a doleful kingdom, and its ruler a miserable man?"

Then Pelias sighed heavily again and again and again, like a man who had to tell some dreadful story, and was afraid to begin; but at last,—

"For seven long years and more have I never known a quiet night; and no more will he who comes after me, till the Golden Fleece be brought home."

Then he told Jason the story of Phrixus, and of the Golden Fleece; and told him, too, which was a lie, that Phrixus' spirit tormented him, calling to him day and night. And his daughters came, and told the same tale (for their father had taught them their parts), and wept, and said, "Oh, who will bring home the Golden Fleece, that our uncle's spirit may rest; and that we may have rest also, whom he never lets sleep in peace?"

Jason sat awhile, sad and silent; for he had often heard of that Golden Fleece; but he looked on it as a thing hopeless and impossible for any mortal man to win.

But when Pelias saw him silent, he began to talk of other things, and courted Jason more and more, speaking to him as if he was certain to be his heir, and asking his advice about the kingdom; till Jason, who was young and simple, could not help saying to himself, "Surely he is not the dark man whom people call him. Yet why did he drive my father out?" And he asked Pelias boldly: "Men say that you are terrible, and a man of blood; but I find you a kind and hospitable man; and as you are to me, so will I be to you. Yet why did you drive my father out?"

Pelias smiled, and sighed. "Men have slandered

me in that, as in all things. Your father was growing old and weary, and he gave the kingdom up to me of his own will. You shall see him to-morrow, and ask him; and he will tell you the same."

Jason's heart leapt in him when he heard that he was to see his father; and he believed all that Pelias said, forgetting that his father might not dare to tell the truth.

"One thing more there is," said Pelias, "on which I need your advice; for, though you are young, I see in you a wisdom beyond your years. There is one neighbour of mine, whom I dread more than all men on earth. I am stronger than he now, and can command him; but I know that if he stay among us, he will work my ruin in the end. Can you give me a plan, Jason, by which I can rid myself of that man?"

After a while Jason answered, half laughing, "Were I you, I would send him to fetch that same Golden Fleece; for if he once set forth after it you would never be troubled with him more."

And at that a bitter smile came across Pelias' lips, and a flash of wicked joy into his eyes; and Jason saw it, and started; and over his mind came the warning of the old man, and his own one sandal, and the oracle, and he saw that he was taken in a trap.

But Pelias only answered gently, "My son, he shall be sent forthwith."

"You mean me?" cried Jason, starting up, "because I came here with one sandal?" And he lifted his fist angrily, while Pelias stood up to him like a wolf at bay; and whether of the two was the stronger and the fiercer it would be hard to tell.

But after a moment Pelias spoke gently, "Why then so rash, my son? You, and not I, have said what is said; why blame me for what I have not done? Had you bid me love the man of whom I spoke, and make him my son-in-law and heir, I would have obeyed you; and what if I obey you now, and

send the man to win himself immortal fame? I have not harmed you, or him. One thing at least I know, that he will go, and that gladly; for he has a hero's heart within him, loving glory, and scorning to break the word which he has given."

Jason saw that he was entrapped; but his second promise to Cheiron came into his mind, and he thought, "What if the Centaur were a prophet in that also, and meant that I should win the Fleece!" Then he cried aloud,—

"You have well spoken, cunning uncle of mine! I love glory, and I dare keep to my word. I will go and fetch this Golden Fleece. Promise me but this in return, and keep your word as I keep mine. Treat my father lovingly while I am gone, for the sake of the all-seeing Zeus; and give me up the kingdom for my own on the day that I bring back the Golden Fleece."

Then Pelias looked at him and almost loved him, in the midst of all his hate; and said: "I promise, and I will perform. It will be no shame to give up my kingdom to the man who wins that Fleece."

Then they swore a great oath between them; and afterwards both went in, and lay down to sleep.

But Jason could not sleep for thinking of his mighty oath, and how he was to fulfil it, all alone, and without wealth or friends. So he tossed a long time upon his bed, and thought of this plan and of that; and sometimes Phrixus seemed to call him, in a thin voice, faint and low, as if it came from far across the sea, "Let me come home to my fathers and have rest." And sometimes he seemed to see the eyes of Hera, and to hear her words again—"Call on me in the hour of need, and see if the Immortals can forget."

And on the morrow he went to Pelias, and said, "Give me a victim, that I may sacrifice to Hera." So he went up, and offered his sacrifice; and as he

stood by the altar Hera sent a thought into his mind ; and he went back to Pelias, and said,—

" If you are indeed in earnest, give me two heralds, that they may go round to all the princes of the Minuai, who were pupils of the Centaur with me, that we may fit out a ship together, and take what shall befall."

At that Pelias praised his wisdom, and hastened to send the heralds out ; for he said in his heart, " Let all the princes go with him, and, like him, never return ; for so I shall be lord of all the Minuai, and the greatest king in Hellas."

Part III

HOW THEY BUILT THE SHIP "ARGO" IN IOLCOS

So the heralds went out, and cried to all the heroes of the Minuai, "Who dare come to the adventure of the Golden Fleece?"

And Hera stirred the hearts of all the princes, and they came from all their valleys to the yellow sands of Pagasai. And first came Heracles the mighty, with his lion's skin and club, and behind him Hylas his young squire, who bore his arrows and his bow; and Tiphys, the skilful steersman; and Butes, the fairest of all men; and Castor and Polydeuces the twins, the sons of the magic swan; and Cæneus, the strongest of mortals, whom the Centaurs tried in vain to kill, and overwhelmed him with trunks of pine trees, but even so he would not die; and thither came Zetes and Calais, the winged sons of the north wind; and Peleus, the father of Achilles, whose bride was silver-footed Thetis, the goddess of the sea. And thither came Telamon and Oileus, the fathers of the two Aiantes, who fought upon the plains of Troy; and Mopsus, the wise soothsayer, who knew the speech of birds; and Idmon, to whom Phœbus gave a tongue to prophesy of things to come; and Ancaios, who could read the stars, and knew all the circles of the heavens; and Argus, the famed shipbuilder, and many a hero more, in helmets of brass and gold with

tall dyed horse-hair crests, and embroidered shirts of linen beneath their coats of mail, and greaves of polished tin to guard their knees in fight ; with each man his shield upon his shoulder, of many a fold of tough bull's hide, and his sword of tempered bronze in his silver-studded belt ; and in his right hand a pair of lances, of the heavy white ash-staves.

So they came down to Iolcos, and all the city came out to meet them, and were never tired with looking at their height, and their beauty, and their gallant bearing, and the glitter of their inlaid arms. And some said, " Never was such a gathering of the heroes since the Hellens conquered the land." But the women sighed over them, and whispered, " Alas ! they are all going to their death ! "

Then they felled the pines on Pelion, and shaped them with the axe, and Argus taught them to build a galley, the first long ship which ever sailed the seas. They pierced her for fifty oars—an oar for each hero of the crew—and pitched her with coal-black pitch, and painted her bows with vermilion ; and they named her *Argo* after Argus, and worked at her all day long. And at night Pelias feasted them like a king, and they slept in his palace-porch.

But Jason went away to the northward, and into the land of Thrace, till he found Orpheus, the prince of minstrels, where he dwelt in his cave under Rhodope, among the savage Cicon tribes. And he asked him, " Will you leave your mountains, Orpheus, my fellow-scholar in old times, and cross Strymon once more with me, to sail with the heroes of the Minuai, and bring home the Golden Fleece, and charm for us all men and all monsters with your magic harp and song ? "

Then Orpheus sighed : " Have I not had enough of toil and of weary wandering far and wide since I lived in Cheiron's cave, above Iolcos by the sea ? In vain is the skill and the voice which my goddess mother gave me ; in vain have I sung and laboured ;

in vain I went down to the dead, and charmed all the kings of Hades, to win back Eurydice my bride. For I won her, my beloved, and lost her again the same day, and wandered away in my madness, even to Egypt and the Libyan sands, and the isles of all the seas, driven on by the terrible gadfly, while I charmed in vain the hearts of men, and the savage forest beasts, and the trees, and the lifeless stones, with my magic harp and song, giving rest, but finding none. But at last Calliope my mother delivered me, and brought me home in peace ; and I dwell here in the cave alone, among the savage Cicon tribes, softening their wild hearts with music and the gentle laws of Zeus. And now I must go out again, to the ends of all the earth, far away into the misty darkness, to the last wave of the Eastern Sea. But what is doomed must be, and a friend's demand obeyed ; for prayers are the daughters of Zeus, and who honours them honours him."

Then Orpheus rose up sighing, and took his harp, and went over Strymon. And he led Jason to the south-west, up the banks of Haliacmon and over the spurs of Pindus, to Dodona the town of Zeus, where it stood by the side of the sacred lake, and the fountain which breathed out fire, in the darkness of the ancient oakwood, beneath the mountain of the hundred springs. And he led him to the holy oak, where the black dove settled in old times, and was changed into the priestess of Zeus, and gave oracles to all nations round. And he bade him cut down a bough, and sacrifice to Hera and to Zeus ; and they took the bough and came to Iolcos, and nailed it to the beak-head of the ship.

And at last the ship was finished, and they tried to launch her down the beach ; but she was too heavy for them to move her, and her keel sank deep into the sand. Then all the heroes looked at each other blushing ; but Jason spoke, and said, " Let us ask

the magic bough; perhaps it can help us in our need."

Then a voice came from the bough, and Jason heard the words it said, and bade Orpheus play upon the harp, while the heroes waited round, holding the pine-trunk rollers, to help her toward the sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp, and began his magic song—"How sweet it is to ride upon the surges, and to leap from wave to wave, while the wind sings cheerful in the cordage, and the oars flash fast among the foam! How sweet it is to roam across the ocean, and see new towns and wondrous lands, and to come home laden with treasure, and to win undying fame!"

And the good ship *Argo* heard him, and longed to be away and out at sea; till she stirred in every timber, and heaved from stem to stern, and leapt up from the sand upon the rollers, and plunged onward like a gallant horse; and the heroes fed her path with pine-trunks, till she rushed into the whispering sea.

Then they stored her well with food and water, and pulled the ladder up on board, and settled themselves each man to his oar, and kept time to Orpheus' harp; and away across the bay they rowed southward, while the people lined the cliffs; and the women wept, while the men shouted, at the starting of that gallant crew.

Part IV

HOW THE ARGONAUTS SAILED TO COLCHIS

And what happened next, my children, whether it be true or not, stands written in ancient songs, which you shall read for yourselves some day. And grand old songs they are, written in grand old rolling verse ; and they call them the Songs of Orpheus, or the Orphics, to this day. And they tell how the heroes came to Aphetai, across the bay, and waited for the south-west wind, and chose themselves a captain from their crew : and how all called for Heracles, because he was the strongest and most huge ; but Heracles refused, and called for Jason, because he was the wisest of them all. So Jason was chosen captain ; and Orpheus heaped a pile of wood, and slew a bull, and offered it to Hera, and called all the heroes to stand round, each man's head crowned with olive, and to strike their swords into the bull. Then he filled a golden goblet with the bull's blood, and with wheaten flour, and honey, and wine, and the bitter salt-sea water, and bade the heroes taste. So each tasted the goblet, and passed it round, and vowed an awful vow : and they vowed before the sun, and the night, and the blue-haired sea who shakes the land, to stand by Jason faithfully in the adventure of the Golden Fleece ; and whosoever shrank back, or disobeyed, or turned traitor to his vow, then justice should minister against him, and the Erinnyes who track guilty men.

Then Jason lighted the pile, and burnt the carcase

of the bull; and they went to their ship and sailed eastward, like men who have a work to do; and the place from which they went was called Aphetai, the sailing-place, from that day forth. Three thousand years and more they sailed away, into the unknown Eastern seas; and great nations have come and gone since then, and many a storm has swept the earth; and many a mighty armament, to which *Argo* would be but one small boat; English and French, Turkish and Russian, have sailed those waters since; yet the fame of that small *Argo* lives for ever, and her name is become a proverb among men.

So they sailed past the Isle of Sciathos, with the Cape of Sepius on their left, and turned to the northward toward Pelion, up the long Magnesian shore. On their right hand was the open sea, and on their left old Pelion rose, while the clouds crawled round his dark pine-forests, and his caps of summer snow. And their hearts yearned for the dear old mountain, as they thought of pleasant days gone by, and of the sports of their boyhood, and their hunting, and their schooling in the cave beneath the cliff. And at last Peleus spoke: "Let us land here, friends, and climb the dear old hill once more. We are going on a fearful journey; who knows if we shall see Pelion again? Let us go up to Cheiron our master, and ask his blessing ere we start. And I have a boy, too, with him, whom he trains as he trained me once—the son whom Thetis brought me, the silver-footed lady of the sea, whom I caught in the cave, and tamed her, though she changed her shape seven times. For she changed, as I held her, into water, and to vapour, and to burning flame, and to a rock, and to a black-maned lion, and to a tall and stately tree. But I held her and held her ever, till she took her own shape again, and led her to my father's house, and won her for my bride. And all the rulers of Olympus came to our wedding, and the heavens and the earth rejoiced together, when an Immortal wedded

mortal man. And now let me see my son ; for it is not often I shall see him upon earth : famous he will be, but short-lived, and die in the flower of youth."

So Tiphys the helmsman steered them to the shore under the crags of Pelion ; and they went up through the dark pine-forests toward the Centaur's cave.

And they came into the misty hall, beneath the snow-crowned crag ; and saw the great Centaur lying with his huge limbs spread upon the rock ; and beside him stood Achilles, the child whom no steel could wound, and played upon his harp right sweetly, while Cheiron watched and smiled.

Then Cheiron leapt up and welcomed them, and kissed them every one, and set a feast before them of swine's flesh, and venison, and good wine ; and young Achilles served them, and carried the golden goblet round. And after supper all the heroes clapped their hands, and called on Orpheus to sing ; but he refused, and said, " How can I, who am the younger, sing before our ancient host ? " So they called on Cheiron to sing, and Achilles brought him his harp ; and he began a wondrous song ; a famous story of old time, of the fight between the Centaurs and the Lapithai, which you may still see carved in stone. He sang how his brothers came to ruin by their folly, when they were mad with wine ; and how they and the heroes fought, with fists, and teeth, and the goblets from which they drank ; and how they tore up the pine trees in their fury, and hurled great crags of stone, while the mountains thundered with the battle, and the land was wasted far and wide ; till the Lapithai drove them from their home in the rich Thessalian plains to the lonely glens of Pindus, leaving Cheiron all alone. And the heroes praised his song right heartily ; for some of them had helped in that great fight.

Then Orpheus took the lyre, and sang of Chaos, and the making of the wondrous World, and how all things sprang from Love, who could not live alone in the

Abyss. And as he sang, his voice rose from the cave, above the crags, and through the tree-tops, and the glens of oak and pine. And the trees bowed their heads when they heard it, and the grey rocks cracked and rang, and the forest beasts crept near to listen, and the birds forsook their nests and hovered round. And old Cheiron clapt his hands together, and beat his hoofs upon the ground, for wonder at that magic song.

Then Peleus kissed his boy, and wept over him, and they went down to the ship; and Cheiron came down with them, weeping, and kissed them one by one, and blest them, and promised to them great renown. And the heroes wept when they left him, till their great hearts could weep no more; for he was kind and just and pious, and wiser than all beasts and men. Then he went up to a cliff, and prayed for them, that they might come home safe and well; while the heroes rowed away, and watched him standing on his cliff above the sea, with his great hands raised toward heaven, and his white locks waving in the wind; and they strained their eyes to watch him to the last, for they felt that they should look on him no more.

So they rowed on over the long swell of the sea, past Olympus, the seat of the Immortals, and past the wooded bays of Athos, and Samothrace the sacred isle; and they came past Lemnos to the Hellespont, and through the narrow strait of Abydos, and so on into the Propontis, which we call Marmora now. And there they met with Cyzicus, ruling in Asia over the Dolions, who, the songs say, was the son of Æneas, of whom you will hear many a tale some day. For Homer tells us how he fought at Troy, and Virgil how he sailed away and founded Rome; and men believed until late years that from him sprang our old British kings. Now Cyzicus, the songs say, welcomed the heroes, for his father had been one of Cheiron's scholars; so he welcomed them, and feasted them,

and stored their ship with corn and wine, and cloaks and rugs, the songs say, and shirts, of which no doubt they stood in need.

But at night, while they lay sleeping, came down on them terrible men, who lived with the bears in the mountains, like Titans or giants in shape ; for each of them had six arms, and they fought with young firs and pines. But Heracles killed them all before morn with his deadly poisoned arrows ; but among them, in the darkness, he slew Cyzicus the kindly prince.

Then they got to their ship and to their oars, and Tiphys bade them cast off the hawsers and go to sea. But as he spoke a whirlwind came, and spun the *Argo* round, and twisted the hawsers together, so that no man could loose them. Then Tiphys dropped the rudder from his hand, and cried, " This comes from the Gods above." But Jason went forward, and asked counsel of the magic bough.

Then the magic bough spoke, and answered : " This is because you have slain Cyzicus your friend. You must appease his soul, or you will never leave this shore."

Jason went back sadly, and told the heroes what he had heard. And they leapt on shore, and searched till dawn ; and at dawn they found the body, all rolled in dust and blood, among the corpses of those monstrous beasts. And they wept over their kind host, and laid him on a fair bed, and heaped a huge mound over him, and offered black sheep at his tomb, and Orpheus sang a magic song to him, that his spirit might have rest. And then they held games at the tomb, after the custom of those times, and Jason gave prizes to each winner. To Ancaios he gave a golden cup, for he wrestled best of all ; and to Heracles a silver one, for he was the strongest of all ; and to Castor, who rode best, a golden crest ; and Polydeuces the boxer had a rich carpet, and to Orpheus for his song a sandal with golden wings. But Jason himself was the best of all

the archers, and the Minuai crowned him with an olive crown ; and so, the songs say, the soul of good Cyzicus was appeased and the heroes went on their way in peace.

But when Cyzicus' wife heard that he was dead she died likewise of grief ; and her tears became a fountain of clear water, which flows the whole year round.

Then they rowed away, the songs say, along the Mysian shore, and past the mouth of Rhyndacus, till they found a pleasant bay, sheltered by the long ridges of Arganthus, and by high walls of basalt rock. And there they ran the ship ashore upon the yellow sand, and furled the sail, and took the mast down, and lashed it in its crutch. And next they let down the ladder, and went ashore to sport and rest.

And there Heracles went away into the woods, bow in hand, to hunt wild deer ; and Hylas the fair boy slipt away after him, and followed him by stealth, until he lost himself among the glens, and sat down weary to rest himself by the side of a lake ; and there the water-nymphs came up to look at him, and loved him, and carried him down under the lake to be their playfellow, for ever happy and young. And Heracles sought for him in vain, shouting his name till all the mountains rang ; but Hylas never heard him, far down under the sparkling lake. So while Heracles wandered searching for him, a fair breeze sprang up, and Heracles was nowhere to be found ; and the *Argo* sailed away, and Heracles was left behind, and never saw the noble Phasian stream.

Then the Minuai came to a doleful land, where Amycus the giant ruled, and cared nothing for the laws of Zeus, but challenged all strangers to box with him, and those whom he conquered he slew. But Polydeuces the boxer struck him a harder blow than he ever felt before, and slew him ; and the Minuai went on up the Bosphorus, till they came to the city of Phineus, the fierce Bithynian king ; for Zetes and

Calais bade Jason land there, because they had a work to do.

And they went up from the shore toward the city, through forests white with snow; and Phineus came out to meet them with a lean and woeful face, and said, "Welcome, gallant heroes, to the land of bitter blasts, the land of cold and misery; yet I will feast you as best I can." And he led them in, and set meat before them; but before they could put their hands to their mouths, down came two fearful monsters, the like of whom man never saw; for they had the faces and the hair of fair maidens, but the wings and claws of hawks; and they snatched the meat from off the table, and flew shrieking out above the roofs.

Then Phineus beat his breast and cried: "These are the Harpies, whose names are the Whirlwind and the Swift, the daughters of Wonder and of the Amber-nymph, and they rob us night and day. They carried off the daughters of Pandareus, whom all the Gods had blest; for Aphrodite fed them on Olympus with honey and milk and wine; and Hera gave them beauty and wisdom, and Athené skill in all the arts; but when they came to their wedding, the Harpies snatched them both away, and gave them to be slaves to the Erinnyes, and live in horror all their days. And now they haunt me, and my people, and the Bosphorus, with fearful storms; and sweep away our food from off our tables, so that we starve in spite of all our wealth."

Then up rose Zetes and Calais, the winged sons of the North-wind, and said, "Do you not know us, Phineus, and these wings which grow upon our backs?" And Phineus hid his face in terror; but he answered not a word.

"Because you have been a traitor, Phineus, the Harpies haunt you night and day. Where is Cleopatra our sister, your wife, whom you keep in prison? and where are her two children, whom you blinded in

your rage, at the bidding of an evil woman, and cast them out upon the rocks? Swear to us that you will right our sister, and cast out that wicked woman; and then we will free you from your plague, and drive the whirlwind maidens to the south; but if not, we will put out your eyes, as you put out the eyes of your own sons."

Then Phineus swore an oath to them, and drove out the wicked woman; and Jason took those two poor children, and cured their eyes with magic herbs.

But Zetes and Calais rose up sadly and said, "Farewell now, heroes all; farewell, our dear companions, with whom we played on Pelion in old times; for a fate is laid upon us, and our day is come at last, in which we must hunt the whirlwinds over land and sea for ever; and if we catch them they die, and if not, we die ourselves."

At that all the heroes wept; but the two young men sprang up, and aloft into the air after the Harpies, and the battle of the winds began.

The heroes trembled in silence as they heard the shrieking of the blasts; while the palace rocked and all the city, and great stones were torn from the crags, and the forest pines were hurled earthward, north and south and east and west, and the Bosphorus boiled white with foam, and the clouds were dashed against the cliffs.

But at last the battle ended, and the Harpies fled screaming toward the south, and the sons of the North-wind rushed after them, and brought clear sunshine where they passed. For many a league they followed them, over all the isles of the Cyclades, and away to the south-west across Hellas, till they came to the Ionian Sea, and there they fell upon the Echinades, at the mouth of the Achelous; and those isles were called the Whirlwind Isles for many a hundred years. But what became of Zetes and Calais I know not, for the heroes never saw them again: and some say that

Heracles met them, and quarrelled with them, and slew them with his arrows ; and some say that they fell down from weariness and the heat of the summer sun, and that the Sun-god buried them among the Cyclades, in the pleasant Isle of Tenos ; and for many hundred years their grave was shown there, and over it a pillar, which turned to every wind. But those dark storms and whirlwinds haunt the Bosphorus until this day.

But the Argonauts went eastward, and out into the open sea, which we now call the Black Sea, but it was called the Euxine then. No Hellen had ever crossed it, and all feared that dreadful sea, and its rocks, and shoals, and fogs, and bitter freezing storms ; and they told strange stories of it, some false and some half-true, how it stretched northward to the ends of the earth, and the sluggish Putrid Sea, and the everlasting night, and the regions of the dead. So the heroes trembled, for all their courage, as they came into that wild Black Sea, and saw it stretching out before them, without a shore, as far as eye could see.

And first Orpheus spoke, and warned them, " We shall come now to the wandering blue rocks ; my mother warned me of them, Calliope, the immortal muse."

And soon they saw the blue rocks shining like spires and castles of grey glass, while an ice-cold wind blew from them and chilled all the heroes' hearts. And as they neared they could see them heaving, as they rolled upon the long sea-waves, crashing and grinding together, till the roar went up to heaven. The sea sprang up in spouts between them, and swept round them in white sheets of foam ; but their heads swung nodding high in air, while the wind whistled shrill among the crags.

The heroes' hearts sank within them, and they lay upon their oars in fear ; but Orpheus called to Tiphys the helmsman, " Between them we must pass ; so

look ahead for an opening, and be brave, for Hera is with us." But Tiphys the cunning helmsman stood silent, clenching his teeth, till he saw a heron come flying mast-high toward the rocks, and hover awhile before them, as if looking for a passage through. Then he cried, " Hera has sent us a pilot ; let us follow the cunning bird."

Then the heron flapped to and fro a moment, till he saw a hidden gap, and into it he rushed like an arrow, while the heroes watched what would befall.

And the blue rocks clashed together as the bird fled swiftly through ; but they struck but a feather from his tail, and then rebounded apart at the shock.

Then Tiphys cheered the heroes, and they shouted ; and the oars bent like withes beneath their strokes as they rushed between those toppling ice-crags and the cold blue lips of death. And ere the rocks could meet again they had passed them, and were safe out in the open sea.

And after that they sailed on wearily along the Asian coast, by the Black Cape and Thyneis, where the hot stream of Thymbris falls into the sea, and Sangarius, whose waters float on the Euxine, till they came to Wolf the river, and to Wolf the kindly king. And there died two brave heroes, Idmon and Tiphys the wise helmsman : one died of an evil sickness, and one a wild boar slew. So the heroes heaped a mound above them, and set upon it an oar on high, and left them there to sleep together, on the far-off Lycian shore. But Idas killed the boar, and avenged Tiphys ; and Ancaios took the rudder and was helmsman, and steered them on toward the east.

And they went on past Sinope, and many a mighty river's mouth, and past many a barbarous tribe, and the cities of the Amazons, the warlike women of the East, till all night they heard the clank of anvils, and the roar of furnace-blasts, and the forge-fires shone like sparks through the darkness in the mountain

glens aloft ; for they were come to the shores of the Chalybes, the smiths who never tire, but serve Ares the cruel War-god, forging weapons day and night.

And at day-dawn they looked eastward, and midway between the sea and the sky they saw white snow-peaks hanging, glittering sharp and bright above the clouds. And they knew that they were come to Caucasus, at the end of all the earth : Caucasus the highest of all mountains, the father of the rivers of the East. On his peak lies chained the Titan, while a vulture tears his heart ; and at his feet are piled dark forests round the magic Colchian land.

And they rowed three days to the eastward, while Caucasus rose higher hour by hour, till they saw the dark stream of Phasis rushing headlong to the sea, and, shining above the tree-tops, the golden roofs of King Aietes, the child of the Sun.

Then out spoke Ancaios the helmsman : "We are come to our goal at last, for there are the roofs of Aietes, and the woods where all poisons grow ; but who can tell us where among them is hid the Golden Fleece ? Many a toil must we bear ere we find it, and bring it home to Greece."

But Jason cheered the heroes, for his heart was high and bold ; and he said : "I will go alone up to Aietes, though he be the child of the Sun, and win him with soft words. Better so than to go all together, and to come to blows at once." But the Minuai would not stay behind, so they rowed boldly up the stream.

And a dream came to Aietes, and filled his heart with fear. He thought he saw a shining star, which fell into his daughter's lap ; and that Medeia his daughter took it gladly, and carried it to the river-side, and cast it in, and there the whirling river bore it down, and out into the Euxine Sea.

Then he leapt up in fear, and bade his servants bring his chariot, that he might go down to the river-

side and appease the nymphs, and the heroes whose spirits haunt the bank. So he went down in his golden chariot, and his daughters by his side, Medeia the fair witch-maiden, and Chalciope, who had been Phrixus' wife, and behind him a crowd of servants and soldiers, for he was a rich and mighty prince.

And as he drove down by the reedy river he saw *Argo* sliding up beneath the bank, and many a hero in her, like Immortals for beauty and for strength, as their weapons glittered round them in the level morning sunlight, through the white mist of the stream. But Jason was the noblest of all; for Hera, who loved him, gave him beauty and tallness and terrible manhood.

And when they came near together and looked into each other's eyes the heroes were awed before Aietes as he shone in his chariot, like his father the glorious Sun; for his robes were of rich gold tissue, and the rays of his diadem flashed fire; and in his hand he bore a jewelled sceptre, which glittered like the stars; and sternly he looked at them under his brows, and sternly he spoke and loud,—

"Who are you, and what want you here, that you come to the shore of Cutaia? Do you take no account of my rule, nor of my people the Colchians who serve me, who never tired yet in the battle, and know well how to face an invader?"

And the heroes sat silent awhile before the face of that ancient king. But Hera the awful goddess put courage into Jason's heart, and he rose and shouted loudly in answer: "We are no pirates nor lawless men. We come not to plunder and to ravage, or carry away slaves from your land; but my uncle, the son of Poseidon, Pelias the Minuan king, he it is who has set me on a quest to bring home the Golden Fleece. And these too, my bold comrades, they are no nameless men; for some are the sons of Immortals, and some of heroes far renowned. And we too never



Medeia's heart pitied the heroes, and Jason most of all.

tire in battle, and know well how to give blows and to take; yet we wish to be guests at your table: it will be better so for both."

Then Aietes' rage rushed up like a whirlwind, and his eyes flashed fire as he heard; but he crushed his anger down in his breast, and spoke mildly a cunning speech,—

"If you will fight for the Fleece with my Colchians, then many a man must die. But do you indeed expect to win from me the Fleece in fight?

"So few are you that if you be worsted I can load your ship with your corpses. But if you will be ruled by me, you will find it better far to choose the best man among you, and let him fulfil the labours which I demand. Then I will give him the Golden Fleece for a prize and a glory to you all."

So saying, he turned his horses and drove back in silence to the town. And the Minuai sat silent with sorrow, and longed for Heracles and his strength; for there was no facing the thousands of the Colchians and the fearful chance of war.

But Chalciope, Phrixus' widow, went weeping to the town; for she remembered her Minuan husband, and all the pleasures of her youth, while she watched the fair faces of his kinsmen, and their long locks of golden hair. And she whispered to Medeia her sister, "Why should all these brave men die? why does not my father give them up the Fleece, that my husband's spirit may have rest?"

And Medeia's heart pitied the heroes, and Jason most of all; and she answered, "Our father is stern and terrible, and who can win the Golden Fleece?" But Chalciope said, "These men are not like our men; there is nothing which they cannot dare nor do."

And Medeia thought of Jason and his brave countenance, and said, "If there was one among them who knew no fear, I could show him how to win the Fleece."

So in the dusk of evening they went down to the

river-side, Chalciope and Medeia the witch-maiden, and Argus, Phrixus' son. And Argus the boy crept forward, among the beds of reeds, till he came where the heroes were sleeping, on the thwarts of the ship, beneath the bank, while Jason kept ward on shore, and leant upon his lance full of thought. And the boy came to Jason, and said,—

"I am the son of Phrixus, your cousin; and Chalciope my mother waits for you, to talk about the Golden Fleece."

Then Jason went boldly with the boy, and found the two princesses standing; and when Chalciope saw him she wept, and took his hands and cried,—

"O cousin of my beloved, go home before you die!"

"It would be base to go home now, fair princess, and to have sailed all these seas in vain." Then both the princesses besought him; but Jason said, "It is too late."

"But you know not," said Medeia, "what he must do who would win the Fleece. He must tame the two brazen-footed bulls, who breathe devouring flame; and with them he must plough ere nightfall four acres in the field of Ares; and he must sow them with serpents' teeth, of which each tooth springs up into an armed man. Then he must fight with all those warriors; and little will it profit him to conquer them, for the Fleece is guarded by a serpent, more huge than any mountain pine; and over his body you must step if you would reach the Golden Fleece."

Then Jason laughed bitterly. "Unjustly is that Fleece kept here, and by an unjust and lawless king; and unjustly shall I die in my youth, for I will attempt it ere another sun be set."

Then Medeia trembled, and said, "No mortal man can reach that Fleece unless I guide him through. For round it, beyond the river, is a wall full nine ells high, with lofty towers and buttresses, and mighty

gates of threefold brass ; and over the gates the wall is arched, with golden battlements above. And over the gateway sits Brimo, the wild witch-huntress of the woods, brandishing a pine torch in her hands, while her mad hounds howl around. No man dare meet her or look on her, but only I her priestess, and she watches far and wide lest any stranger should come near."

" No wall so high but it may be climbed at last, and no wood so thick but it may be crawled through ; no serpent so wary but he may be charmed, or witch-queen so fierce but spells may soothe her ; and I may yet win the Golden Fleece, if a wise maiden help bold men."

And he looked at Medeia cunningly, and held her with his glittering eye, till she blushed and trembled, and said,—

" Who can face the fire of the bull's breath, and fight ten thousand armed men ? "

" He whom you help," said Jason, flattering her, " for your fame is spread over all the earth. Are you not the queen of all enchantresses, wiser even than your sister Circe, in her fairy island in the West ? "

" Would that I were with my sister Circe in her fairy island in the West, far away from sore temptation and thoughts which tear the heart ! But if it must be so—for why should you die ?—I have an ointment here ; I made it from the magic ice-flower which sprang from Prometheus' wound, above the clouds on Caucasus, in the dreary fields of snow. Anoint yourself with that, and you shall have in you seven men's strength ; and anoint your shield with it, and neither fire nor sword can harm you. But what you begin you must end before sunset, for its virtue lasts only one day. And anoint your helmet with it before you sow the serpents' teeth ; and when the sons of earth spring up, cast your helmet among

their ranks, and the deadly crop of the War-god's field will mow itself, and perish."

Then Jason fell on his knees before her, and thanked her and kissed her hands ; and she gave him the vase of ointment, and fled trembling through the reeds. And Jason told his comrades what had happened, and showed them the box of ointment ; and all rejoiced but Idas, and he grew mad with envy.

And at sunrise Jason went and bathed, and anointed himself from head to foot, and his shield, and his helmet, and his weapons, and bade his comrades try the spell. So they tried to bend his lance, but it stood like an iron bar ; and Idas in spite hewed at it with his sword, but the blade flew to splinters in his face. Then they hurled their lances at his shield, but the spear-points turned like lead ; and Cæneus tried to throw him, but he never stirred a foot ; and Polydeuces struck him with his fist a blow which would have killed an ox, but Jason only smiled, and the heroes danced about him with delight ; and he leapt, and ran, and shouted in the joy of that enormous strength, till the sun rose, and it was time to go and to claim Aietes' promise.

So he sent up Telamon and Aithalides to tell Aietes that he was ready for the fight ; and they went up among the marble walls, and beneath the roofs of gold, and stood in Aietes' hall, while he grew pale with rage.

" Fulfil your promise to us, child of the blazing Sun. Give us the serpents' teeth, and let loose the fiery bulls ; for we have found a champion among us who can win the Golden Fleece."

And Aietes bit his lips, for he fancied that they had fled away by night ; but he could not go back from his promise ; so he gave them the serpents' teeth.

Then he called for his chariot and his horses, and sent heralds through all the town ; and all the people went out with him to the dreadful War-god's field.

And there Aietes sat upon his throne, with his warriors on each hand, thousands and tens of thousands, clothed from head to foot in steel chain-mail. And the people and the women crowded to every window and bank and wall; while the Minuai stood together, a mere handful in the midst of that great host.

And Chalciope was there and Argus, trembling, and Medeia, wrapped closely in her veil; but Aietes did not know that she was muttering cunning spells between her lips.

Then Jason cried, "Fulfil your promise, and let your fiery bulls come forth."

Then Aietes bade open the gates, and the magic bulls leapt out. Their brazen hoofs rang upon the ground, and their nostrils sent out sheets of flame, as they rushed with lowered heads upon Jason; but he never flinched a step. The flame of their breath swept round him, but it singed not a hair of his head; and the bulls stopped short and trembled when Medeia began her spell.

Then Jason sprang upon the nearest and seized him by the horn; and up and down they wrestled, till the bull fell grovelling on his knees; for the heart of the brute died within him, and his mighty limbs were loosed, beneath the steadfast eye of that dark witch-maiden and the magic whisper of her lips.

So both the bulls were tamed and yoked; and Jason bound them to the plough, and goaded them onward with his lance till he had ploughed the sacred field.

And all the Minuai shouted; but Aietes bit his lips with rage, for the half of Jason's work was over, and the sun was yet high in heaven.

Then he took the serpents' teeth and sowed them, and waited what would befall. But Medeia looked at him and at his helmet, lest he should forget the lesson she had taught.

And every furrow heaved and bubbled, and out of every clod arose a man. Out of the earth they rose by thousands, each clad from head to foot in steel, and drew their swords and rushed on Jason, where he stood in the midst alone.

Then the Minuai grew pale with fear for him ; but Aietes laughed a bitter laugh. " See ! if I had not warriors enough already round me, I could call them out of the bosom of the earth."

But Jason snatched off his helmet, and hurled it into the thickest of the throng. And blind madness came upon them, suspicion, hate, and fear ; and one cried to his fellow, " Thou didst strike me ! " and another, " Thou art Jason ; thou shalt die ! " So fury seized those earth-born phantoms, and each turned his hand against the rest ; and they fought and were never weary, till they all lay dead upon the ground. Then the magic furrows opened, and the kind earth took them home into her breast ; and the grass grew up all green again above them, and Jason's work was done.

Then the Minuai rose and shouted, till Prometheus heard them from his crag. And Jason cried, " Lead me to the Fleece this moment, before the sun goes down."

But Aietes thought, " He has conquered the bulls and sown and reaped the deadly crop. Who is this who is proof against all magic ? He may kill the serpent yet." So he delayed, and sat taking counsel with his princes till the sun went down and all was dark. Then he bade a herald cry, " Every man to his home for to-night. To-morrow we will meet these heroes, and speak about the Golden Fleece."

Then he turned and looked at Medeia. " This is your doing, false witch-maid ! You have helped these yellow-haired strangers, and brought shame upon your father and yourself ! "

Medeia shrank and trembled, and her face grew pale

with fear ; and Aietes knew that she was guilty, and whispered, " If they win the Fleece, you die ! "

But the Minuai marched toward their ship, growling like lions cheated of their prey ; for they saw that Aietes meant to mock them, and to cheat them out of all their toil. And Oileus said, " Let us go to the grove together, and take the Fleece by force."

And Idas the rash cried, " Let us draw lots who shall go in first ; for, while the dragon is devouring one, the rest can slay him and carry off the Fleece in peace." But Jason held them back, though he praised them ; for he hoped for Medeia's help.

And after a while Medeia came trembling, and wept a long while before she spoke. And at last,—

" My end is come, and I must die ; for my father has found out that I have helped you. You he would kill if he dared ; but he will not harm you, because you have been his guests. Go, then, go, and remember poor Medeia when you are far away across the sea." But all the heroes cried,—

" If you die, we die with you ; for without you we cannot win the Fleece, and home we will not go without it, but fall here fighting to the last man."

" You need not die," said Jason. " Flee home with us across the sea. Show us first how to win the Fleece ; for you can do it. Why else are you the priestess of the grove ? Show us but how to win the Fleece, and come with us, and you shall be my queen, and rule over the rich princes of the Minuai, in Iolcos by the sea."

And all the heroes pressed round, and vowed to her that she should be their queen.

Medeia wept, and shuddered, and hid her face in her hands ; for her heart yearned after her sisters and her playfellows, and the home where she was brought up as a child. But at last she looked up at Jason, and spoke between her sobs,—

" Must I leave my home and my people, to wander

with strangers across the sea? The lot is cast, and I must endure it. I will show you how to win the Golden Fleece. Bring up your ship to the wood-side, and moor her there against the bank; and let Jason come up at midnight, and one brave comrade with him, and meet me beneath the wall."

Then all the heroes cried together, "I will go!" "and I!" "and I!" And Idas the rash grew mad with envy; for he longed to be foremost in all things. But Medeia calmed them, and said, "Orpheus shall go with Jason, and bring his magic harp; for I hear of him that he is the king of all minstrels, and can charm all things on earth."

And Orpheus laughed for joy, and clapped his hands, because the choice had fallen on him; for in those days poets and singers were as bold warriors as the best.

So at midnight they went up the bank, and found Medeia; and beside came Absyrtus her young brother, leading a yearling lamb.

Then Medeia brought them to a thicket beside the War-god's gate; and there she bade Jason dig a ditch, and kill the lamb, and leave it there, and strew on it magic herbs and honey from the honeycomb.

Then sprang up through the earth, with the red fire flashing before her, Brimo the wild witch-huntress, while her mad hounds howled around. She had one head like a horse's, and another like a ravening hound's, and another like a hissing snake's, and a sword in either hand. And she leapt into the ditch with her hounds, and they ate and drank their fill, while Jason and Orpheus trembled, and Medeia hid her eyes. And at last the witch-queen vanished, and fled with her hounds into the woods; and the bars of the gates fell down, and the brazen doors flew wide, and Medeia and the heroes ran forward and hurried through the poison wood, among the dark stems of the mighty beeches, guided by the gleam of

the Golden Fleece, until they saw it hanging on one vast tree in the midst. And Jason would have sprung to seize it ; but Medeia held him back, and pointed, shuddering, to the tree-foot, where the mighty serpent lay, coiled in and out among the roots, with a body like a mountain pine. His coils stretched many a fathom, spangled with bronze and gold ; and half of him they could see, but no more, for the rest lay in the darkness far beyond.

And when he saw them coming he lifted up his head, and watched them with his small bright eyes, and flashed his forked tongue, and roared like the fire among the woodlands, till the forest tossed and groaned. For his cries shook the trees from leaf to root, and swept over the long reaches of the river, and over Aietes' hall, and woke the sleepers in the city, till mothers clasped their children in their fear.

But Medeia called gently to him, and he stretched out his long spotted neck, and licked her hand, and looked up in her face, as if to ask for food. Then she made a sign to Orpheus, and he began his magic song.

And as he sung, the forest grew calm again, and the leaves on every tree hung still ; and the serpent's head sank down, and his brazen coils grew limp, and his glittering eyes closed lazily, till he breathed as gently as a child, while Orpheus called to pleasant Slumber, who gives peace to men, and beasts, and waves.

Then Jason leapt forward warily, and stept across that mighty snake, and tore the Fleece from off the tree-trunk ; and the four rushed down the garden, to the bank where the *Argo* lay.

There was a silence for a moment, while Jason held the Golden Fleece on high. Then he cried, " Go now, good *Argo*, swift and steady, if ever you would see Pelion more."

And she went, as the heroes drove her, grim and silent all, with muffled oars, till the pine-wood bent



"Go now, good *Argo*, swift and steady."

like willow in their hands, and stout *Argo* groaned beneath their strokes.

On and on, beneath the dewy darkness, they fled swiftly down the swirling stream ; underneath black walls, and temples, and the castles of the princes of the East ; past sluice-mouths, and fragrant gardens, and groves of all strange fruits ; past marshes where fat kine lay sleeping, and long beds of whispering reeds ; till they heard the merry music of the surge upon the bar, as it tumbled in the moonlight all alone.

Into the surge they rushed, and *Argo* leapt the breakers like a horse ; for she knew the time was come to show her mettle, and win honour for the heroes and herself.

Into the surge they rushed, and *Argo* leapt the breakers like a horse, till the heroes stopped all panting, each man upon his oar, as she slid into the still broad sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp and sang a pæan, till the heroes' hearts rose high again ; and they rowed on stoutly and steadfastly, away into the darkness of the West.

Part V

HOW THE ARGONAUTS WERE DRIVEN INTO THE UNKNOWN SEA

So they fled away in haste to the westward; but Aietes manned his fleet and followed them. And Lynceus the quick-eyed saw him coming, while he was still many a mile away, and cried, "I see a hundred ships, like a flock of white swans, far in the east." And at that they rowed hard, like heroes; but the ships came nearer every hour.

Then Medeia, the dark witch-maiden, laid a cruel and a cunning plot; for she killed Absyrtus her young brother, and cast him into the sea, and said, "Ere my father can take up his corpse and bury it, he must wait long, and be left far behind."

And all the heroes shuddered, and looked one at the other for shame; yet they did not punish that dark witch-woman, because she had won for them the Golden Fleece.

And when Aietes came to the place he saw the floating corpse; and he stopped a long while, and bewailed his son, and took him up, and went home. But he sent on his sailors toward the westward, and bound them by a mighty curse—"Bring back to me that dark witch-woman, that she may die a dreadful death. But if you return without her, you shall die by the same death yourselves."

So the Argonauts escaped for that time: but

Father Zeus saw that foul crime; and out of the heavens he sent a storm, and swept the ship far from her course. Day after day the storm drove her, amid foam and blinding mist, till they knew no longer where they were, for the sun was blotted from the skies. And at last the ship struck on a shoal, amid low isles of mud and sand, and the waves rolled over her and through her, and the heroes lost all hope of life.

Then Jason cried to Hera, "Fair queen, who hast befriended us till now, why hast thou left us in our misery, to die here among unknown seas? It is hard to lose the honour which we have won with such toil and danger, and hard never to see Hellas again, and the pleasant bay of Pagasai."

Then out and spoke the magic bough which stood upon the *Argo's* beak, "Because Father Zeus is angry, all this has fallen on you; for a cruel crime has been done on board, and the sacred ship is foul with blood."

At that some of the heroes cried, "Medeia is the murderess. Let the witch-woman bear her sin, and die!" And they seized Medeia, to hurl her into the sea, and atone for the young boy's death; but the magic bough spoke again, "Let her live till her crimes are full. Vengeance waits for her, slow and sure; but she must live, for you need her still. She must show you the way to her sister Circe, who lives among the islands of the West. To her you must sail, a weary way, and she shall cleanse you from your guilt."

Then all the heroes wept aloud when they heard the sentence of the oak; for they knew that a dark journey lay before them, and years of bitter toil. And some upbraided the dark witch-woman, and some said, "Nay, we are her debtors still; without her we should never have won the Fleece." But most of them bit their lips in silence, for they feared the witch's spells.

And now the sea grew calmer, and the sun shone

out once more, and the heroes thrust the ship off the sand-bank, and rowed forward on their weary course under the guiding of the dark witch-maiden, into the wastes of the unknown sea.

Whither they went I cannot tell, nor how they came to Circe's isle. Some say that they went to the westward, and up the Ister stream, and so came into the Adriatic, dragging their ship over the snowy Alps. And others say that they went southward, into the Red Indian Sea, and past the sunny lands where spices grow, round Æthiopia toward the West; and that at last they came to Libya, and dragged their ship across the burning sands, and over the hills into the Syrtis, where the flats and quicksands spread for many a mile, between rich Cyrene and the Lotus-eaters' shore. But all these are but dreams and fables and dim hints of unknown lands.

But all say that they came to a place where they had to drag their ship across the land nine days with ropes and rollers, till they came into an unknown sea. And the best of all the old songs tells us how they went away toward the North, till they came to the slope of Caucasus, where it sinks into the sea; and to the narrow Cimmerian Bosphorus, where the Titan swam across upon the bull; and thence into the lazy waters of the still Mæotid lake. And thence they went northward ever, up the Tanais, which we call Don, past many a wandering shepherd-tribe, and the one-eyed Arimaspi, of whom old Greek poets tell, who steal the gold from the Griffins, in the cold Riphaian hills.

And they passed the Scythian archers, and the Tauri who eat men, and the wandering Hyperboreai, who feed their flocks beneath the pole-star, until they came into the northern ocean, the dull dead Cronian Sea. And there *Argo* would move on no longer; and each man clasped his elbow, and leaned his head upon his hand, heart-broken with toil and hunger, and gave himself up to death. But brave Ancaios the helms-

man cheered up their hearts once more, and bade them leap on land, and haul the ship with ropes and rollers for many a weary day, whether over land, or mud, or ice, I know not, for the song is mixed and broken like a dream. And it says next, how they came to the rich nation of the famous long-lived men ; and to the coast of the Cimmerians, who never saw the sun, buried deep in the glens of the snow mountains ; and to the fair land of Hermione, where dwelt the most righteous of all nations ; and to the gates of the world below, and to the dwelling-place of dreams.

And at last Ancaios shouted, " Endure a little while, brave friends, the worst is surely past ; for I can see the pure west wind ruffle the water, and hear the roar of ocean on the sands. So raise up the mast, and set the sail, and face what comes like men."

Then out spoke the magic bough, " Ah, would that I had perished long ago, and been whelmed by the dread blue rocks, beneath the fierce swell of the Euxine ! Better so, than to wander for ever, disgraced by the guilt of my princes ; for the blood of Absyrtus still tracks me, and woe follows hard upon woe. And now some dark horror will clutch me, if I come near the Isle of Ierne. Unless you will cling to the land, and sail southward and southward for ever, I shall wander beyond the Atlantic, to the ocean which has no shore."

Then they blest the magic bough, and sailed southward along the land. But ere they could pass Ierne, the land of mists and storms, the wild wind came down dark and roaring, and caught the sail, and strained the ropes. And away they drove twelve nights, on the wide wild western sea, through the foam, and over the rollers, while they saw neither sun nor stars. And they cried again, " We shall perish, for we know not where we are. We are lost in the dreary damp darkness, and cannot tell north from south."

But Lynceus the long-sighted called gaily from the

bows, " Take heart again, brave sailors ; for I see a pine-clad isle, and the halls of the kind Earth-mother, with a crown of clouds around them."

But Orpheus said, " Turn from them, for no living man can land there : there is no harbour on the coast, but steep-walled cliffs all round."

So Ancaios turned the ship away ; and for three days more they sailed on, till they came to Aiaia, Circe's home, and the fairy island of the West.

And there Jason bid them land, and seek about for any sign of living man. And as they went inland Circe met them, coming down toward the ship ; and they trembled when they saw her, for her hair, and face, and robes shone like flame.

And she came and looked at Medeia ; and Medeia hid her face beneath her veil.

And Circe cried, " Ah, wretched girl, have you forgotten all your sins, that you come hither to my island, where the flowers bloom all the year round ? Where is your aged father, and the brother whom you killed ? Little do I expect you to return in safety with these strangers whom you love. I will send you food and wine : but your ship must not stay here, for it is foul with sin, and foul with sin its crew."

And the heroes prayed her, but in vain, and cried, " Cleanse us from our guilt ! " But she sent them away, and said, " Go on to Malea, and there you may be cleansed, and return home."

Then a fair wind rose, and they sailed eastward, by Tartessus on the Iberian shore, till they came to the Pillars of Hercules, and the Mediterranean Sea. And thence they sailed on through the deeps of Sardinia, and past the capes of the Tyrrhenian shore, till they came to a flowery island, upon a still bright summer's eve. And as they neared it, slowly and wearily, they heard sweet songs upon the shore. But when Medeia heard it, she started and cried, " Beware, all heroes, for these are the rocks of the Sirens. You must pass

close by them, for there is no other channel ; but those who listen to that song are lost."

Then Orpheus spoke, the king of all minstrels, " Let them match their song against mine. I have charmed stones, and trees, and dragons, how much more the hearts of men ! " So he caught up his lyre, and stood upon the poop, and began his magic song.

And now they could see the Sirens on Anthemousa, the flowery isle ; three fair maidens sitting on the beach, beneath a red rock in the setting sun, among beds of crimson poppies and golden asphodel. Slowly they sung and sleepily, with silver voices, mild and clear, which stole over the golden waters, and into the hearts of all the heroes, in spite of Orpheus' song.

And all things stayed around and listened ; the gulls sat in white lines along the rocks ; on the beach great seals lay basking, and kept time with lazy heads ; while silver shoals of fish came up to hearken, and whispered as they broke the shining calm. The Wind overhead hushed his whistling, as he shepherded his clouds toward the west ; and the clouds stood in mid blue, and listened dreaming, like a flock of golden sheep.

And as the heroes listened, the oars fell from their hands, and their heads drooped on their breasts, and they closed their heavy eyes ; and they dreamed of bright still gardens, and of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of their renown no more.

Then one lifted his head suddenly, and cried, "What use in wandering for ever ? Let us stay here and rest awhile." And another, " Let us row to the shore, and hear the words they sing." And another, " I care not for the words, but for the music. They shall sing me to sleep, that I may rest."

And Butes, the sun of Pandion, the fairest of all mortal men, leapt out and swam toward the shore,

crying, " I come, I come, fair maidens, to live and die here, listening to your song."

Then Medeia clapped her hands together, and cried, " Sing louder, Orpheus, sing a bolder strain ; wake up these hapless sluggards, or none of them will see the land of Hellas more."

Then Orpheus lifted his harp, and crashed his cunning hand across the strings ; and his music and his voice rose like a trumpet through the still evening air ; into the air it rushed like thunder, till the rocks rang and the sea ; and into their souls it rushed like wine, till all hearts beat fast within their breasts.

And he sung the song of Perseus, how the Gods led him over land and sea, and how he slew the loathly Gorgon, and won himself a peerless bride ; and how he sits now with the Gods upon Olympus, a shining star in the sky, immortal with his immortal bride, and honoured by all men below.

So Orpheus sang, and the Sirens, answering each other across the golden sea, till Orpheus' voice drowned the Sirens', and the heroes caught their oars again.

And they cried, " We will be men like Perseus, and we will dare and suffer to the last. Sing us his song again, brave Orpheus, that we may forget the Sirens and their spell."

And as Orpheus sang, they dashed their oars into the sea, and kept time to his music, as they fled fast away ; and the Sirens' voices died behind them, in the hissing of the foam along their wake.

But Butes swam to the shore, and knelt down before the Sirens, and cried, " Sing on ! sing on ! " But he could say no more, for a charmed sleep came over him, and a pleasant humming in his ears ; and he sank all along upon the pebbles, and forgot all heaven and earth, and never looked at that sad beach around him, all strewn with the bones of men.

Then slowly rose up those three fair sisters, with a

cruel smile upon their lips; and slowly they crept down towards him, like leopards who creep upon their prey; and their hands were like the talons of eagles as they stept across the bones of their victims to enjoy their cruel feast.

But fairest Aphrodite saw him from the highest Idalian peak, and she pitied his youth and his beauty, and leapt up from her golden throne; and like a falling star she cleft the sky, and left a trail of glittering light, till she stooped to the Isle of the Sirens, and snatched their prey from their claws. And she lifted Butes as he lay sleeping, and wrapt him in a golden mist; and she bore him to the peak of Lilybæum, and he slept there many a pleasant year.

But when the Sirens saw that they were conquered, they shrieked for envy and rage, and leapt from the beach into the sea, and were changed into rocks until this day.

Then they came to the straits by Lilybæum, and saw Sicily, the three-cornered island, under which Enceladus the giant lies groaning day and night, and when he turns the earth quakes, and his breath bursts out in roaring flames from the highest cone of Ætna, above the chestnut woods. And there Charybdis caught them in its fearful coils of wave, and rolled mast-high about them, and spun them round and round; and they could go neither back nor forward, while the whirlpool sucked them in.

And while they struggled they saw near them, on the other side the strait, a rock stand in the water, with its peak wrapt round in clouds—a rock which no man could climb, though he had twenty hands and feet, for the stone was smooth and slippery, as if polished by man's hand; and half-way up a misty cave looked out toward the west.

And when Orpheus saw it he groaned, and struck his hands together. And "Little will it help us," he cried, "to escape the jaws of the whirlpool; for in

that cave lives Scylla, the sea-hag with a young whelp's voice; my mother warned me of her ere we sailed away from Hellas; she has six heads, and six long necks, and hides in that dark cleft. And from her cave she fishes for all things which pass by—for sharks, and seals, and dolphins, and all the herds of Amphitrite. And never ship's crew boasted that they came safe by her rock, for she bends her long necks down to them, and every mouth takes up a man. And who will help us now? For Hera and Zeus hate us, and our ship is foul with guilt; so we must die, whatever befalls."

Then out of the depths came Thetis, Peleus' silver-footed bride, for love of her gallant husband, and all her nymphs around her; and they played like snow-white dolphins, diving on from wave to wave, before the ship, and in her wake, and beside her, as dolphins play. And they caught the ship, and guided her, and passed her on from hand to hand, and tossed her through the billows, as maidens toss the ball. And when Scylla stooped to seize her, they struck back her ravening heads, and foul Scylla whined, as a whelp whines, at the touch of their gentle hands. But she shrank into her cave affrighted—for all bad things shrink from good—and *Argo* leapt safe past her, while a fair breeze rose behind. Then Thetis and her nymphs sank down to their coral caves beneath the sea, and their gardens of green and purple, where live flowers bloom all the year round; while the heroes went on rejoicing, yet dreading what might come next.

After that they rowed on steadily for many a weary day, till they saw a long high island, and beyond it a mountain land. And they searched till they found a harbour, and there rowed boldly in. But after awhile they stopped, and wondered, for there stood a great city on the shore, and temples and walls and gardens, and castles high in air upon the cliffs. And on either

side they saw a harbour, with a narrow mouth, but wide within ; and black ships without number, high and dry upon the shore.

Then Ancaios, the wise helmsman, spoke, " What new wonder is this ? I know all isles, and harbours, and the windings of all seas ; and this should be Corcyra, where a few wild goat-herds dwell. But whence come these new harbours and vast works of polished stone ? "

But Jason said, " They can be no savage people. We will go in and take our chance."

So they rowed into the harbour, among a thousand black-beaked ships, each larger far than *Argo*, toward a quay of polished stone. And they wondered at that mighty city, with its roofs of burnished brass, and long and lofty walls of marble, with strong palisades above. And the quays were full of people, merchants, and mariners, and slaves, going to and fro with merchandise among the crowd of ships. And the heroes' hearts were humbled, and they looked at each other and said, " We thought ourselves a gallant crew when we sailed from Iolcos by the sea ; but how small we look before this city, like an ant before a hive of bees."

Then the sailors hailed them roughly from the quay, " What men are you ?—we want no strangers here, nor pirates. We keep our business to ourselves."

But Jason answered gently, with many a flattering word, and praised their city and their harbour, and their fleet of gallant ships. " Surely you are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea ; and we are but poor wandering mariners, worn out with thirst and toil. Give us but food and water, and we will go on our voyage in peace."

Then the sailors laughed, and answered, " Stranger, you are no fool ; you talk like an honest man, and you shall find us honest too. We are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea ; but come

ashore to us, and you shall have the best that we can give."

So they limped ashore, all stiff and weary, with long ragged beards and sunburnt cheeks, and garments torn and weather-stained, and weapons rusted with the spray, while the sailors laughed at them (for they were rough-tongued, though their hearts were frank and kind). And one said, "These fellows are but raw sailors; they look as if they had been sea-sick all the day." And another, "Their legs have grown crooked with much rowing, till they waddle in their walk like ducks."

At that Idas the rash would have struck them; but Jason held him back, till one of the merchant kings spoke to them, a tall and stately man.

"Do not be angry, strangers; the sailor boys must have their jest. But we will treat you justly and kindly, for strangers and poor men come from God; and you seem no common sailors by your strength, and height, and weapons. Come up with me to the palace of Alcinous, the rich sea-going king, and we will feast you well and heartily; and after that you shall tell us your name."

But Medeia hung back, and trembled, and whispered in Jason's ear, "We are betrayed, and are going to our ruin, for I see my countrymen among the crowd; dark-eyed Colchi in steel mail-shirts, such as they wear in my father's land."

"It is too late to turn," said Jason. And he spoke to the merchant king, "What country is this, good sir; and what is this new-built town?"

"This is the land of the Phæaces, beloved by all the Immortals; for they come hither and feast like friends with us, and sit by our side in the hall. Hither we came from Liburnia to escape the unrighteous Cyclopes; for they robbed us, peaceful merchants, of our hard-earned wares and wealth. So Nausithous, the son of Poseidon, brought us hither, and died in

peace ; and now his son Alcinous rules us, and Arete the wisest of queens."

So they went up across the square, and wondered still more as they went ; for along the quays lay in order great cables, and yards, and masts, before the fair temple of Poseidon, the blue-haired king of the seas. And around the square worked the shipwrights, as many in number as ants, twining ropes, and hewing timber, and smoothing long yards and oars. And the Minuai went on in silence through clean white marble streets, till they came to the hall of Alcinous, and they wondered then still more. For the lofty palace shone aloft in the sun, with walls of plated brass, from the threshold to the innermost chamber, and the doors were of silver and gold. And on each side of the doorway sat living dogs of gold, who never grew old or died, so well Hephaistos had made them in his forges in smoking Lemnos, and gave them to Alcinous to guard his gates by night. And within, against the walls, stood thrones on either side, down the whole length of the hall, strewn with rich glossy shawls ; and on them the merchant kings of those crafty sea-roving Phæaces sat eating and drinking in pride, and feasting there all the year round. And boys of molten gold stood each on a polished altar, and held torches in their hands, to give light all night to the guests. And round the house sat fifty maid-servants, some grinding the meal in the mill, some turning the spindle, some weaving at the loom, while their hands twinkled as they passed the shuttle, like quivering aspen leaves.

And outside before the palace a great garden was walled round, filled full of stately fruit-trees, grey olives, and sweet figs, and pomegranates, pears, and apples, which bore the whole year round. For the rich south-west wind fed them, till pear grew ripe on pear, fig on fig, and grape on grape, all the winter and the spring. And at the further end gay flower-beds bloomed through all seasons of the year ; and two

fair fountains rose, and ran, one through the garden grounds, and one beneath the palace gate, to water all the town. Such noble gifts the heavens had given to Alcinous the wise.

So they went in, and saw him sitting, like Poseidon, on his throne, with his golden sceptre by him, in garments stiff with gold, and in his hand a sculptured goblet, as he pledged the merchant kings ; and beside him stood Arete, his wise and lovely queen, and leaned against a pillar as she spun her golden threads.

Then Alcinous rose, and welcomed them, and bade them sit and eat ; and the servants brought them tables, and bread, and meat, and wine.

But Medeia went on trembling toward Arete the fair queen, and fell at her knees, and clasped them, and cried, weeping, as she knelt,—

" I am your guest, fair queen, and I entreat you by Zeus, from whom prayers come. Do not send me back to my father to die some dreadful death ; but let me go my way, and bear my burden. Have I not had enough of punishment and shame ? "

" Who are you, strange maiden ? and what is the meaning of your prayer ? "

" I am Medeia, daughter of Aietes, and I saw my countrymen here to-day ; and I know that they are come to find me, and take me home to die some dreadful death."

Then Arete frowned, and said, " Lead this girl in, my maidens ; and let the kings decide, not I."

And Alcinous leapt up from his throne, and cried, " Speak, strangers, who are you ? and who is this maiden ? "

" We are the heroes of the Minuai," said Jason ; " and this maiden has spoken truth. We are the men who took the Golden Fleece, the men whose fame has run round every shore. We came hither out of the ocean, after sorrows such as man never saw before. We went out many, and come back few, for many a

noble comrade have we lost. So let us go, as you should let your guests go, in peace ; that the world may say, " Alcinous is a just king."

But Alcinous frowned, and stood deep in thought ; and at last he spoke,—

" Had not the deed been done which is done, I should have said this day to myself, ' It is an honour to Alcinous, and to his children after him, that the far-famed Argonauts are his guests.' But these Colchi are my guests, as you are ; and for this month they have waited here with all their fleet, for they have hunted all the seas of Hellas, and could not find you, and dared neither go farther, nor go home."

" Let them choose out their champions, and we will fight them, man for man."

" No guests of ours shall fight upon our island, and if you go outside they will outnumber you. I will do justice between you, for I know and do what is right."

Then he turned to his kings, and said, " This may stand over till to-morrow. To-night we will feast our guests, and hear the story of all their wanderings, and how they came hither out of the ocean."

So Alcinous bade the servants take the heroes in, and bathe them, and give them clothes. And they were glad when they saw the warm water, for it was long since they had bathed. And they washed off the sea-salt from their limbs, and anointed themselves from head to foot with oil, and combed out their golden hair. Then they came back again into the hall, while the merchant kings rose up to do them honour. And each man said to his neighbour, " No wonder that these men won fame. How they stand now like Giants, or Titans, or Immortals come down from Olympus, though many a winter has worn them, and many a fearful storm. What must they have been when they sailed from Iolcos, in the bloom of their youth, long ago ? "

Then they went out to the garden ; and the merchant princes said, " Heroes, run races with us. Let us see whose feet are nimblest."

" We cannot race against you, for our limbs are stiff from sea : and we have lost our two swift comrades, the sons of the North Wind. But do not think us cowards : if you wish to try our strength, we will shoot, and box, and wrestle, against any men on earth."

And Alcinous smiled, and answered, " I believe you, gallant guests ; with your long limbs and broad shoulders, we could never match you here. For we care nothing here for boxing, or for shooting with the bow ; but for feasts, and songs, and harping, and dancing, and running races, to stretch our limbs on shore."

So they danced there and ran races, the jolly merchant kings, till the night fell, and all went in.

And then they ate and drank, and comforted their weary souls, till Alcinous called a herald, and bade him go and fetch the harper.

The herald went out, and fetched the harper, and led him in by the hand ; and Alcinous cut him a piece of meat, from the fattest of the haunch, and sent it to him, and said, " Sing to us, noble harper, and rejoice the heroes' hearts."

So the harper played and sang, while the dancers danced strange figures ; and after that the tumblers showed their tricks, till the heroes laughed again.

Then, " Tell me, heroes," asked Alcinous, " you who have sailed the ocean round, and seen the manners of all nations, have you seen such dancers as ours here, or heard such music and such singing ? We hold ours to be the best on earth."

" Such dancing we have never seen," said Orpheus ; " and your singer is a happy man, for Phœbus himself must have taught him, or else he is the son of a Muse, as I am also, and have sung once or twice, though not so well as he."

"Sing to us, then, noble stranger," said Alcinous; "and we will give you precious gifts."

So Orpheus took his magic harp, and sang to them a stirring song of their voyage from Iolcos, and their dangers, and how they won the Golden Fleece; and of Medeia's love, and how she helped them, and went with them over land and sea; and of all their fearful dangers, from monsters, and rocks, and storms, till the heart of Arete was softened, and all the women wept. And the merchant kings rose up, each man from off his golden throne, and clapped their hands, and shouted, "Hail to the noble Argonauts, who sailed the unknown sea!"

Then he went on, and told their journey over the sluggish northern main, and through the shoreless outer ocean, to the fairy island of the west; and of the Sirens, and Scylla, and Charybdis, and all the wonders they had seen, till midnight passed and the day dawned; but the kings never thought of sleep. Each man sat still and listened, with his chin upon his hand.

And at last, when Orpheus had ended, they all went thoughtful out, and the heroes lay down to sleep, beneath the sounding porch outside, where Arete had strewn them rugs and carpets, in the sweet still summer night.

But Arete pleaded hard with her husband for Medeia, for her heart was softened. And she said, "The Gods will punish her, not we. After all, she is our guest and my suppliant, and prayers are the daughters of Zeus. And who, too, dare part man and wife, after all they have endured together?"

But Alcinous smiled. "The minstrel's song has charmed you: but I must remember what is right, for songs cannot alter justice; and I must be faithful to my name. Alcinous I am called, the man of sturdy sense; and Alcinous I will be." But for all that Arete besought him, until she won him round.

So next morning he sent a herald, and called the kings into the square, and said, "This is a puzzling matter: remember but one thing. These Minuai live close by us, and we may meet them often on the seas; but Aietes lives afar off, and we have only heard his name. Which, then, of the two is it safer to offend—the men near us, or the men far off?"

The princes laughed, and praised his wisdom; and Alcinous called the heroes to the square, and the Colchi also; and they came and stood opposite each other, but Medeia stayed in the palace. Then Alcinous spoke, "Heroes of the Colchi, what is your errand about this lady?"

"To carry her home with us, that she may die a shameful death; but if we return without her, we must die the death she should have died."

"What say you to this, Jason the Æolid?" said Alcinous, turning to the Minuai.

"I say," said the cunning Jason, "that they are come here on a bootless errand. Do you think that you can make her follow you, heroes of the Colchi—her, who knows all spells and charms? She will cast away your ships on quicksands, or call down on you Brimo the wild huntress; or the chains will fall from off her wrists, and she will escape in her dragon-car; or if not thus, some other way, for she has a thousand plans and wiles. And why return home at all, brave heroes, and face the long seas again, and the Bosphorus, and the stormy Euxine, and double all your toil? There is many a fair land round these coasts, which waits for gallant men like you. Better to settle there, and build a city, and let Aietes and Colchis help themselves."

Then a murmur rose among the Colchi, and some cried, "He has spoken well;" and some, "We have had enough of roving, we will sail the seas no more!" And the chief said at last, "Be it so, then; a plague she has been to us, and a plague to the house of her

father, and a plague she will be to you. Take her, since you are no wiser ; and we will sail away toward the north."

Then Alcinous gave them food, and water, and garments, and rich presents of all sorts ; and he gave the same to the Minuai, and sent them all away in peace.

So Jason kept the dark witch-maiden to breed him woe and shame ; and the Colchi went northward into the Adriatic, and settled, and built towns along the shore.

Then the heroes rowed away to the eastward, to reach Hellas, their beloved land ; but a storm came down upon them, and swept them far away toward the south. And they rowed till they were spent with struggling, through the darkness and the blinding rain ; but where they were they could not tell, and they gave up all hope of life. And at last they touched the ground, and when daylight came they waded to the shore ; and saw nothing round but sand and desolate salt pools, for they had come to the quicksands of the Syrtis, and the dreary treeless flats which lie between Numidia and Cyrene, on the burning shore of Africa. And there they wandered starving for many a weary day, ere they could launch their ship again, and gain the open sea. And there Canthus was killed, while he was trying to drive off sheep, by a stone which a herdsman threw.

And there too Mopsus died, the seer who knew the voices of all birds ; but he could not foretell his own end, for he was bitten in the foot by a snake, one of those which sprang from the Gorgon's head when Perseus carried it across the sands.

At last they rowed away toward the northward, for many a weary day, till their water was spent, and their food eaten ; and they were worn out with hunger and thirst. But at last they saw a long steep island, and a blue peak high among the clouds ; and

they knew it for the peak of Ida, and the famous land of Crete. And they said, "We will land in Crete, and see Minos the just king, and all his glory and his wealth; at least he will treat us hospitably, and let us fill our water-casks upon the shore."

But when they came nearer to the island they saw a wondrous sight upon the cliffs. For on a cape to the westward stood a giant, taller than any mountain pine, who glittered aloft against the sky like a tower of burnished brass. He turned and looked on all sides round him, till he saw the *Argo* and her crew; and when he saw them he came toward them, more swiftly than the swiftest horse, leaping across the glens at a bound, and striding at one step from down to down. And when he came abreast of them he brandished his arms up and down, as a ship hoists and lowers her yards, and shouted with his brazen throat like a trumpet from off the hills, "You are pirates, you are robbers! If you dare land here, you die."

Then the heroes cried, "We are no pirates. We are all good men and true, and all we ask is food and water;" but the giant cried the more,—

"You are robbers, you are pirates all; I know you; and if you land, you shall die the death."

Then he waved his arms again as a signal, and they saw the people flying inland, driving their flocks before them, while a great flame arose among the hills. Then the giant ran up a valley and vanished, and the heroes lay on their oars in fear.

But Medeia stood watching all from under her steep black brows, with a cunning smile upon her lips and a cunning plot within her heart. At last she spoke, "I know this giant. I heard of him in the East. Hephaistos the Fire King made him in his forge in Ætna beneath the earth, and called him Talus, and gave him to Minos for a servant, to guard the coast of Crete. Thrice a day he walks round the island, and

never stops to sleep; and if strangers land he leaps into his furnace, which flames there among the hills; and when he is red-hot he rushes on them, and burns them in his brazen hands."

Then all the heroes cried, "What shall we do, wise Medeia? We must have water, or we die of thirst. Flesh and blood we can face fairly; but who can face this red-hot brass?"

"I can face red-hot brass, if the tale I hear be true. For they say that he has but one vein in all his body, filled with liquid fire; and that this vein is closed with a nail: but I know not where that nail is placed. But if I can get it once into these hands, you shall water your ship here in peace."

Then she bade them put her on shore, and row off again, and wait what would befall.

And the heroes obeyed her unwillingly, for they were ashamed to leave her so alone; but Jason said, "She is dearer to me than to any of you, yet I will trust her freely on shore; she has more plots than we can dream of in the windings of that fair and cunning head."

So they left the witch-maiden on the shore; and she stood there in her beauty all alone, till the giant strode back red-hot from head to heel, while the grass hissed and smoked beneath his tread.

And when he saw the maiden alone, he stopped; and she looked boldly up into his face without moving, and began her magic song:—

"Life is short, though life is sweet; and even men of brass and fire must die. The brass must rust, the fire must cool, for time gnaws all things in their turn. Life is short, though life is sweet: but sweeter to live for ever; sweeter to live ever youthful like the Gods, who have ichor in their veins—ichor which gives life, and youth, and joy, and a bounding heart."

Then Talus said, "Who are you, strange maiden, and where is this ichor of youth?"

Then Medeia held up a flask of crystal, and said, "Here is the ichor of youth. I am Medeia the enchantress; my sister Circe gave me this, and said, 'Go and reward Talus, the faithful servant, for his fame is gone out into all lands.' So come, and I will pour this into your veins, that you may live for ever young."

And he listened to her false words, that simple Talus, and came near; and Medeia said, "Dip yourself in the sea first, and cool yourself, lest you burn my tender hands; then show me where the nail in your vein is, that I may pour the ichor in."

Then that simple Talus dipped himself in the sea, till it hissed, and roared, and smoked; and came and knelt before Medeia, and showed her the secret nail.

And she drew the nail out gently, but she poured no ichor in; and instead the liquid fire spouted forth, like a stream of red-hot iron. And Talus tried to leap up, crying, "You have betrayed me, false witch-maiden!" But she lifted up her hands before him, and sang, till he sank beneath her spell. And, as he sank, his brazen limbs clanked heavily, and the earth groaned beneath his weight; and the liquid fire ran from his heel, like a stream of lava, to the sea; and Medeia laughed, and called to the heroes, "Come ashore, and water your ship in peace."

So they came, and found the giant lying dead; and they fell down, and kissed Medeia's feet; and watered their ship, and took sheep and oxen, and so left that inhospitable shore.

At last, after many more adventures, they came to the Cape of Malea, at the south-west point of the Peloponnese. And there they offered sacrifices, and Orpheus purged them from their guilt. Then they rode away again to the northward, past the Laconian shore, and came all worn and tired, by Sunium, and up the long Eubœan Strait, until they saw

once more Pelion, and Aphetai, and Iolcos by the sea.

And they ran the ship ashore; but they had no strength left to haul her up the beach; and they crawled out on the pebbles, and sat down, and wept till they could weep no more. For the houses and the trees were all altered; and all the faces which they saw were strange; and their joy was swallowed up in sorrow, while they thought of their youth, and all their labour, and the gallant comrades they had lost.

And the people crowded round, and asked them, "Who are you, that you sit weeping here?"

"We are the sons of your princes, who sailed out many a year ago. We went to fetch the Golden Fleece, and we have brought it, and grief therewith. Give us news of our fathers and our mothers, if any of them be left alive on earth."

Then there was shouting, and laughing, and weeping; and all the kings came to the shore, and they led away the heroes to their homes, and bewailed the valiant dead.

Then Jason went up with Medeia to the palace of his uncle Pelias. And when he came in Pelias sat by the hearth, crippled and blind with age; while opposite him sat Æson, Jason's father, crippled and blind likewise; and the two old men's heads shook together as they tried to warm themselves before the fire.

And Jason fell down at his father's knees, and wept, and called him by his name. And the old man stretched his hands out, and felt him, and said, "Do not mock me, young hero. My son Jason is dead long ago at sea."

"I am your own son Jason, whom you trusted to the Centaur upon Pelion; and I have brought home the Golden Fleece, and a princess of the Sun's race for my bride. So now give me up the kingdom, Pelias

my uncle, and fulfil your promise as I have fulfilled mine."

Then his father clung to him like a child, and wept, and would not let him go ; and cried, " Now I shall not go down lonely to my grave. Promise me never to leave me till I die "

Part VI

WHAT WAS THE END OF THE HEROES

And now I wish that I could end my story pleasantly ; but it is not fault of mine that I cannot. The old songs end it sadly, and I believe that they are right and wise ; for though the heroes were purified at Malea, yet sacrifices cannot make bad hearts good, and Jason had taken a wicked wife, and he had to bear his burden to the last.

And first she laid a cunning plot to punish that poor old Pelias, instead of letting him die in peace.

For she told his daughters, " I can make old things young again ; I will show you how easy it is to do." So she took an old ram and killed him, and put him in a cauldron with magic herbs ; and whispered her spells over him, and he leapt out again a young lamb. So that " Medeia's cauldron " is a proverb still, by which we mean times of war and change, when the world has become old and feeble, and grows young again through bitter pains.

Then she said to Pelias' daughters, " Do to your father as I did to this ram, and he will grow young and strong again." But she only told them half the spell ; so they failed, while Medeia mocked them ; and poor old Pelias died, and his daughters came to misery. But the songs say she cured Æson, Jason's father, and he became young and strong again.

But Jason could not love her, after all her cruel deeds. So he was ungrateful to her, and wronged

her ; and she revenged herself on him. And a terrible revenge she took—too terrible to speak of here. But you will hear of it yourselves when you grow up, for it has been sung in noble poetry and music ; and whether it be true or not, it stands for ever as a warning to us not to seek for help from evil persons, or to gain good ends by evil means. For if we use an adder even against our enemies, it will turn again and sting us.

But of all the other heroes there is many a brave tale left, which I have no space to tell you, so you must read them for yourselves ;—of the hunting of the boar in Calydon, which Meleager killed ; and of Heracles' twelve famous labours ; and of the seven who fought at Thebes ; and of the noble love of Castor and Polydeuces, the twin Dioscuri—how when one died the other would not live without him, so they shared their immortality between them ; and Zeus changed them into the two twin stars which never rise both at once.

And what became of Cheiron, the good immortal beast ? That, too, is a sad story ; for the heroes never saw him more. He was wounded by a poisoned arrow, at Pholoe among the hills, when Heracles opened the fatal wine-jar, which Cheiron had warned him not to touch. And the Centaurs smelt the wine, and flocked to it, and fought for it with Heracles ; but he killed them all with his poisoned arrows, and Cheiron was left alone. Then Cheiron took up one of the arrows, and dropped it by chance upon his foot ; and the poison ran like fire along his veins, and he lay down and longed to die ; and cried, " Through wine I perish, the bane of all my race. Why should I live for ever in this agony ? Who will take my immortality, that I may die ? "

Then Prometheus answered, the good Titan, whom Heracles had set free from Caucasus, " I will take your immortality and live for ever, that I may help

poor mortal men." So Cheiron gave him his immortality, and died, and had rest from pain. And Heracles and Prometheus wept over him, and went to bury him on Pelion ; but Zeus took him up among the stars, to live for ever, grand and mild, low down in the far southern sky.

And in time the heroes died, all but Nestor, the silver-tongued old man ; and left behind them valiant sons, but not so great as they had been. Yet their fame, too, lives till this day, for they fought at the ten years' siege of Troy : and their story is in the book which we call Homer, in two of the noblest songs on earth—the " Iliad," which tells us of the siege of Troy, and Achilles' quarrel with the kings ; and the " Odyssey," which tells the wanderings of Odysseus, through many lands for many years, and how Alcinous sent him home at last, safe to Ithaca his beloved island, and to Penelope his faithful wife, and Telemachus his son, and Euphorbus the noble swineherd, and the old dog who licked his hand and died. We will read that sweet story, children, by the fire some winter night. And now I will end my tale, and begin another and a more cheerful one, of a hero who became a worthy king, and won his people's love.

STORY III.—THESEUS

Part I

HOW THESEUS LIFTED THE STONE

ONCE upon a time there was a princess in Trœzene, Aithra, the daughter of Pittheus the king. She had one fair son, named Theseus, the bravest lad in all the land; and Aithra never smiled but when she looked at him, for her husband had forgotten her, and lived far away. And she used to go up to the mountain above Trœzene, to the temple of Poseidon, and sit there all day looking out across the bay, over Methana, to the purple peaks of Ægina and the Attic shore beyond. And when Theseus was full fifteen years old she took him up with her to the temple, and into the thickets of the grove which grew in the temple-yard. And she led him to a tall plane-tree, beneath whose shade grew arbutus, and lentisk, and purple heather-bushes. And there she sighed, and said, "Theseus, my son, go into that thicket, and you will find at the plane-tree foot a great flat stone; lift it, and bring me what lies underneath."

Then Theseus pushed his way in through the thick bushes, and saw that they had not been moved for many a year. And searching among their roots he found a great flat stone, all overgrown with ivy, and acanthus, and moss. He tried to lift it, but he could not. And he tried till the sweat ran down his brow

from heat, and the tears from his eyes for shame; but all was of no avail. And at last he came back to his mother, and said, "I have found the stone, but I cannot lift it; nor do I think that any man could in all Trœzene."

Then she sighed, and said, "The Gods wait long; but they are just at last. Let it be for another year. The day may come when you will be a stronger man than lives in all Trœzene."

Then she took him by the hand, and went into the temple and prayed, and came down again with Theseus to her home.

And when a full year was past she led Theseus up again to the temple, and bade him lift the stone; but he could not.

Then she sighed, and said the same words again, and went down, and came again the next year; but Theseus could not lift the stone then, nor the year after; and he longed to ask his mother the meaning of that stone, and what might lie underneath it; but her face was so sad that he had not the heart to ask.

So he said to himself, "The day shall surely come when I will lift that stone, though no man in Trœzene can." And in order to grow strong he spent all his days in wrestling, and boxing, and hurling, and taming horses, and hunting the boar and the bull, and coursing goats and deer among the rocks; till upon all the mountains there was no hunter so swift as Theseus; and he killed Phaia the wild sow of Crommyon, which wasted all the land; till all the people said, "Surely the Gods are with the lad."

And when his eighteenth year was past, Aithra led him up again to the temple, and said, "Theseus, lift the stone this day, or never know who you are." And Theseus went into the thicket, and stood over the stone, and tugged at it; and it moved. Then his spirit swelled within him, and he said, "If I break my heart in my body, it shall up." And he tugged

at it once more, and lifted it, and rolled it over with a shout.

And when he looked beneath it, on the ground lay a sword of bronze, with a hilt of glittering gold, and by it a pair of golden sandals ; and he caught them



up, and burst through the bushes like a wild boar, and leapt to his mother, holding them high above his head.

But when she saw them she wept long in silence, hiding her fair face in her shawl ; and Theseus stood by her wondering, and wept also, he knew not why.

And when she was tired of weeping she lifted up her head, and laid her finger on her lips, and said, "Hide them in your bosom, Theseus my son, and come with me where we can look down upon the sea."

Then they went outside the sacred wall, and looked down over the bright blue sea; and Aithra said,—

"Do you see this land at our feet?"

And he said, "Yes; this is Trœzene, where I was born and bred."

And she said, "It is but a little land, barren and rocky, and looks toward the bleak north-east. Do you see that land beyond?"

"Yes; that is Attica, where the Athenian people dwell."

"That is a fair land and large, Theseus my son; and it looks toward the sunny south; a land of olive-oil and honey, the joy of Gods and men. For the Gods have girdled it with mountains, whose veins are of pure silver, and their bones of marble white as snow; and there the hills are sweet with thyme and basil, and the meadows with violet and asphodel, and the nightingales sing all day in the thickets, by the side of ever-flowing streams. There are twelve towns well peopled, the homes of an ancient race, the children of Kekrops the serpent-king, the son of Mother Earth, who wear gold cicalas among the tresses of their golden hair; for like the cicalas they sprang from the earth, and like the cicalas they sing all day, rejoicing in the genial sun. What would you do, son Theseus, if you were king of such a land?"

Then Theseus stood astonished, as he looked across the broad bright sea, and saw the fair Attic shore, from Sunium to Hymettus and Pentelicus, and all the mountain peaks which girdle Athens round. But Athens itself he could not see, for purple Ægina stood before it, midway across the sea.

Then his heart grew great within him, and he said, "If I were king of such a land I would rule it wisely and well in wisdom and in might, that when I died all men might weep over my tomb, and cry, 'Alas for the shepherd of his people!'"

And Aithra smiled and said, "Take, then, the sword and the sandals, and go to Ægeus, king of Athens, who lives on Pallas' hill; and say to him, 'The stone is lifted, but whose is the pledge beneath it?' Then show him the sword and the sandals, and take what the Gods shall send."

But Theseus wept, "Shall I leave you, O my mother?"

But she answered, "Weep not for me. That which is fated must be; and grief is easy to those who do nought but grieve. Full of sorrow was my youth, and full of sorrow my womanhood. Full of sorrow was my youth for Bellerophon, the slayer of the Chimæra, whom my father drove away by treason; and full of sorrow my womanhood, for thy treacherous father and for thee; and full of sorrow my old age will be (for I see my fate in dreams), when the sons of the Swan shall carry me captive to the hollow vale of Eurotas, till I sail across the seas a slave, the handmaid of the pest of Greece. Yet shall I be avenged, when the golden-haired heroes sail against Troy, and sack the palaces of Ilium; then thy son shall set me free from thraldom, and I shall hear the tale of Theseus' fame. Yet beyond that I see new sorrows; but I can bear them as I have borne the past."

Then she kissed Theseus, and wept over him; and went into the temple, and Theseus saw her no more.

Part II

HOW THESEUS SLEW THE DEVOURERS OF MEN

So Theseus stood there alone, with his mind full of many hopes. And first he thought of going down to the harbour and hiring a swift ship, and sailing across the bay to Athens; but even that seemed too slow for him, and he longed for wings to fly across the sea, and find his father. But after awhile his heart began to fail him; and he sighed, and said within himself,—

"What if my father have other sons about him whom he loves? What if he will not receive me? And what have I done that he should receive me? He has forgotten me ever since I was born: why should he welcome me now?"

Then he thought a long while sadly; and at the last he cried aloud, "Yes! I will make him love me; for I will prove myself worthy of his love. I will win honour and renown, and do such deeds that Ægeus shall be proud of me, though he had fifty other sons! Did not Heracles win himself honour, though he was opprest, and the slave of Eurystheus? Did he not kill all robbers and evil beasts, and drain great lakes and marshes, breaking the hills through with his club? Therefore it was that all men honoured him, because he rid them of their miseries, and made life pleasant to them and their children after them. Where can I go, to do as Heracles has done? Where can I find strange adventures, robbers, and monsters, and the

children of hell, the enemies of men? I will go by land, and into the mountains, and round by the way of the Isthmus. Perhaps there I may hear of brave adventures, and do something which shall win my father's love."

So he went by land, and away into the mountains, with his father's sword upon his thigh, till he came to the Spider Mountains, which hang over Epidaurus and the sea, where the glens run downward from one peak in the midst, as the rays spread in the spider's web.

And he went up into the gloomy glens, between the furrowed marble walls, till the lowland grew blue beneath his feet and the clouds drove damp about his head.

But he went up and up for ever, through the spider's web of glens, till he could see the narrow gulfs spread below him, north and south, and east and west; black cracks half-choked with mists, and above all a dreary down.

But over that down he must go, for there was no road right or left; so he toiled on through bog and brake, till he came to a pile of stones.

And on the stones a man was sitting, wrapt in a bear-skin cloak. The head of the bear served him for a cap, and its teeth grinned white around his brows; and the feet were tied about his throat, and their claws shone white upon his chest. And when he saw Theseus he rose, and laughed till the glens rattled.

"And who art thou, fair fly, who hast walked into the spider's web?" But Theseus walked on steadily, and made no answer; but he thought, "Is this some robber? and has an adventure come already to me?" But the strange man laughed louder than ever, and said,—

"Bold fly, know you not that these glens are the web from which no fly ever finds his way out again, and this down the spider's house, and I the spider who sucks the flies? Come hither, and let me feast upon

you ; for it is of no use to run away, so cunning a web has my father Hephaistos spread for me when he made these clefts in the mountains, through which no man finds his way home."

But Theseus came on steadily, and asked,—

" And what is your name among men, bold spider ? and where your spider's fangs ? "

Then the strange man laughed again,—

" My name is Periphetes, the son of Hephaistos and Anticleia the mountain nymph. But men call me Corynetes the club-bearer ; and here is my spider's fang."

And he lifted from off the stones at his side a mighty club of bronze.

" This my father gave me, and forged it himself in the roots of the mountain ; and with it I pound all proud flies till they give out their fatness and their sweetness. So give me up that gay sword of yours, and your mantle, and your golden sandals, lest I pound you, and by ill-luck you die."

But Theseus wrapped his mantle round his left arm quickly, in hard folds, from his shoulder to his hand, and drew his sword, and rushed upon the club-bearer, and the club-bearer rushed on him.

Thrice he struck at Theseus, and made him bend under the blows like a sapling ; but Theseus guarded his head with his left arm, and the mantle which was wrapt around it.

And thrice Theseus sprang upright after the blow, like a sapling when the storm is past ; and he stabbed at the club-bearer with his sword, but the loose folds of the bear-skin saved him.

Then Theseus grew mad, and closed with him, and caught him by the throat, and they fell and rolled over together ; but when Theseus rose up from the ground the club-bearer lay still at his feet.

Then Theseus took his club and his bear-skin, and left him to the kites and crows, and went upon his

journey down the glens on the farther slope, till he came to a broad green valley, and saw flocks and herds sleeping beneath the trees.

And by the side of a pleasant fountain, under the shade of rocks and trees, were nymphs and shepherds dancing ; but no one piped to them while they danced.

And when they saw Theseus they shrieked ; and the shepherds ran off, and drove away their flocks, while the nymphs dived into the fountain like coots, and vanished.

Theseus wondered and laughed : " What strange fancies have folks here who run away from strangers, and have no music when they dance ! " But he was tired, and dusty, and thirsty ; so he thought no more of them, but drank and bathed in the clear pool, and then lay down in the shade under a plane tree, while the water sang him to sleep, as it tinkled down from stone to stone.

And when he woke he heard a whispering, and saw the nymphs peeping at him across the fountain from the dark mouth of a cave, where they sat on green cushions of moss. And one said, " Surely he is not Periphetes ; " and another, " He looks like no robber, but a fair and gentle youth."

Then Theseus smiled, and called them, " Fair nymphs, I am not Periphetes. He sleeps among the kites and crows ; but I have brought away his bear-skin and his club."

Then they leapt across the pool, and came to him, and called the shepherds back. And he told them how he had slain the club-bearer : and the shepherds kissed his feet and sang, " Now we shall feed our flocks in peace, and not be afraid to have music when we dance ; for the cruel club-bearer has met his match, and he will listen for our pipes no more."

Then they brought him kid's flesh and wine, and the nymphs brought him honey from the rocks, and he ate, and drank, and slept again, while the nymphs

and shepherds danced and sang. And when he woke, they begged him to stay; but he would not. "I have a great work to do," he said; "I must be away toward the Isthmus, that I may go to Athens."

But the shepherds said, "Will you go alone toward Athens? None travel that way now, except in armed troops."

"As for arms, I have enough, as you see. And as for troops, an honest man is good enough company for himself. Why should I not go alone toward Athens?"

"If you do, you must look warily about you on the Isthmus, lest you meet Sinis the robber, whom men call Pituocamptes the pine-bender; for he bends down two pine trees, and binds all travellers hand and foot between them, and when he lets the trees go again their bodies are torn in sunder."

"And after that," said another, "you must go inland, and not dare to pass over the cliffs of Sciron; for on the left hand are the mountains, and on the right the sea, so that you have no escape, but must needs meet Sciron the robber, who will make you wash his feet: and while you are washing them he will kick you over the cliff, to the tortoise who lives below, and feeds upon the bodies of the dead."

And before Theseus could answer, another cried, "And after that is a worse danger still, unless you go inland always, and leave Eleusis far on your right. For in Eleusis rules Kerkuon the cruel king, the terror of all mortals, who killed his own daughter Alope in prison. But she was changed into a fair fountain; and her child he cast out upon the mountains, but the wild mares gave it milk. And now he challenges all comers to wrestle with him, for he is the best wrestler in all Attica, and overthrows all who come; and those whom he overthrows he murders miserably, and his palace-court is full of their bones."

Then Theseus frowned, and said, "This seems indeed an ill-ruled land, and adventures enough in it

to be tried. But if I am the heir of it, I will rule it and right it, and here is my royal sceptre." And he shook his club of bronze, while the nymphs and shepherds clung round him, and entreated him not to go.

But on he went nevertheless, till he could see both the seas and the citadel of Corinth towering high above all the land. And he passed swiftly along the Isthmus, for his heart burned to meet that cruel Sinis ; and in a pine-wood at last he met him, where the Isthmus was narrowest and the road ran between high rocks. There he sat upon a stone by the wayside, with a young fir tree for a club across his knees, and a cord laid ready by his side ; and over his head, upon the fir-tops, hung the bones of murdered men.

Then Theseus shouted to him, " Holla, thou valiant pine-bender, hast thou two fir trees left for me ? "

And Sinis leapt to his feet, and answered, pointing to the bones above his head, " My larder has grown empty lately, so I have two fir trees ready for thee." And he rushed on Theseus, lifting his club, and Theseus rushed upon him.

Then they hammered together till the green-woods rang ; but the metal was tougher than the pine, and Sinis' club broke right across, as the bronze came down upon it. Then Theseus heaved up another mighty stroke, and smote Sinis down upon his face ; and knelt upon his back, and bound him with his own cord, and said, " As thou hast done to others, so shall it be done to thee." Then he bent down two young fir trees, and bound Sinis between them, for all his struggling and his prayers ; and let them go, and ended Sinis, and went on, leaving him to the hawks and crows.

Then he went over the hills toward Megara, keeping close along the Saronic Sea, till he came to the cliffs of Sciron, and the narrow path between the mountain and the sea.

And there he saw Sciron sitting by a fountain, at

the edge of the cliff. On his knees was a mighty club; and he had barred the path with stones, so that every one must stop who came up.

Then Theseus shouted to him, and said, "Holla, thou tortoise-feeder, do thy feet need washing to-day?"

And Sciron leapt to his feet, and answered,—

"My tortoise is empty and hungry, and my feet need washing to-day." And he stood before his barrier, and lifted up his club in both hands.

Then Theseus rushed upon him; and sore was the battle upon the cliff, for when Sciron felt the weight of the bronze club, he dropt his own, and closed with Theseus, and tried to hurl him by main force over the cliff. But Theseus was a wary wrestler, and dropt his own club, and caught him by the throat and by the knee, and forced him back against the wall of stones, and crushed him up against them, till his breath was almost gone. And Sciron cried panting, "Loose me, and I will let thee pass." But Theseus answered, "I must not pass till I have made the rough way smooth;" and forced him back against the wall till it fell, and Sciron rolled head over heels.

Then Theseus lifted him up all bruised, and said, "Come hither and wash my feet." And he drew his sword, and sat down by the well, and said, "Wash my feet, or I cut you piecemeal."

And Sciron washed his feet trembling; and when it was done, Theseus rose, and cried, "As thou hast done to others, so shall it be done to thee. Go feed thy tortoise thyself;" and he kicked him over the cliff into the sea.

And whether the tortoise ate him, I know not; for some say that earth and sea both disdained to take his body, so foul it was with sin. So the sea cast it out upon the shore, and the shore cast it back into the sea, and at last the waves hurled it high into the air in anger; and it hung there long without a grave,

till it was changed into a desolate rock, which stands there in the surge until this day.

This at least is true, which Pausanias tells, that in the royal porch at Athens he saw the figure of Theseus modelled in clay, and by him Sciron the robber falling headlong into the sea.

Then he went a long day's journey, past Megara, into the Attic land, and high before him rose the snow-peaks of Cithæron, all cold above the black pine woods, where haunt the Furies, and the raving Bacchæ, and the Nymphs who drive men wild, far aloft upon the dreary mountains, where the storms howl all day long. And on his right hand was the sea always, and Salamis, with its island cliffs, and the sacred strait of the sea-fight, where afterwards the Persians fled before the Greeks. So he went all day until the evening, till he saw the Thriasian plain, and the sacred city of Eleusis, where the Earth-mother's temple stands. For there she met Triptolemus, when all the land lay waste, Demeter the kind Earth-mother, and in her hands a sheaf of corn. And she taught him to plough the fallows, and to yoke the lazy kine ; and she taught him to sow the seed-fields, and to reap the golden grain; and sent him forth to teach all nations, and give corn to labouring men. So at Eleusis all men honour her, whosoever tills the land ; her and Triptolemus her beloved, who gave corn to labouring men.

And he went along the plain into Eleusis, and stood in the market-place, and cried,—

" Where is Kerkuon, the king of the city ? I must wrestle a fall with him to-day."

Then all the people crowded round him, and cried, " Fair youth, why will you die ? Hasten out of the city, before the cruel king hears that a stranger is here."

But Theseus went up through the town, while the people wept and prayed, and through the gates of the palace-yard, and through the piles of bones and skulls,

till he came to the door of Kerkuon's hall, the terror of all mortal men.

And there he saw Kerkuon sitting at the table in the hall alone; and before him was a whole sheep roasted, and beside him a whole jar of wine. And Theseus stood and called him, "Holla, thou valiant wrestler, wilt thou wrestle a fall to-day?"

And Kerkuon looked up and laughed, and answered, "I will wrestle a fall to-day; but come in, for I am lonely and thou weary, and eat and drink before thou die."

Then Theseus went up boldly, and sat down before Kerkuon at the board: and he ate his fill of the sheep's flesh, and drank his fill of the wine; and Theseus ate enough for three men, but Kerkuon ate enough for seven.

But neither spoke a word to the other, though they looked across the table by stealth; and each said in his heart, "He has broad shoulders; but I trust mine are as broad as his."

At last, when the sheep was eaten and the jar of wine drained dry, King Kerkuon rose, and cried, "Let us wrestle a fall before we sleep."

So they tossed off all their garments, and went forth in the palace-yard; and Kerkuon bade strew fresh sand in an open space between the bones. And there the heroes stood face to face, while their eyes glared like wild bulls'; and all the people crowded at the gates to see what would befall.

And there they stood and wrestled, till the stars shone out above their heads; up and down and round, till the sand was stamped hard beneath their feet. And their eyes flashed like stars in the darkness, and their breath went up like smoke in the night air; but neither took nor gave a footstep, and the people watched silent at the gates.

But at last Kerkuon grew angry, and caught Theseus round the neck, and shook him as a mastiff

shakes a rat; but he could not shake him off his feet.

But Theseus was quick and wary, and clasped Kerkuon round the waist, and slipped his loin quickly underneath him, while he caught him by the wrist; and then he hove a mighty heave, a heave which would have stirred an oak, and lifted Kerkuon, and pitched him right over his shoulder on the ground.

Then he leapt on him, and called, "Yield, or I kill thee!" but Kerkuon said no word; for his heart was burst within him with the fall, and the meat, and the wine.

Then Theseus opened the gates, and called in all the people; and they cried, "You have slain our evil king; be you now our king, and rule us well."

"I will be your king in Eleusis, and I will rule you right and well; for this cause I have slain all evil-doers—Sinis, and Sciron, and this man last of all."

Then an aged man stepped forth, and said, "Young hero, hast thou slain Sinis? Beware then of Ægeus, king of Athens, to whom thou goest, for he is near of kin to Sinis."

"Then I have slain my own kinsman," said Theseus, "though well he deserved to die. Who will purge me from his death, for rightfully I slew him, unrighteous and accursed as he was?"

And the old man answered,—

"That will the heroes do, the sons of Phytalus, who dwell beneath the elm tree in Aphidnai, by the bank of silver Cephisus; for they know the mysteries of the Gods. Thither you shall go and be purified, and after you shall be our king."

So he took an oath of the people of Eleusis, that they would serve him as their king, and went away next morning across the Thriasian plain, and over the hills toward Aphidnai, that he might find the sons of Phytalus.

And as he was skirting the Vale of Cephisus, along

the foot of lofty Parnes, a very tall and strong man came down to meet him, dressed in rich garments. On his arms were golden bracelets, and round his neck a collar of jewels; and he came forward, bowing courteously, and held out both his hands, and spoke,—

"Welcome, fair youth, to these mountains; happy am I to have met you! For what greater pleasure to a good man, than to entertain strangers? But I see that you are weary. Come up to my castle, and rest yourself awhile."

"I give you thanks," said Theseus: "but I am in haste to go up the valley, and to reach Aphidnai in the Vale of Cephisus."

"Alas! you have wandered far from the right way, and you cannot reach Aphidnai to-night, for there are many miles of mountain between you and it, and steep passes, and cliffs dangerous after nightfall. It is well for you that I met you, for my whole joy is to find strangers, and to feast them at my castle, and hear tales from them of foreign lands. Come up with me, and eat the best of venison, and drink the rich red wine, and sleep upon my famous bed, of which all travellers say that they never saw the like. For whatsoever the stature of my guest, however tall or short, that bed fits him to a hair, and he sleeps on it as he never slept before." And he laid hold on Theseus' hands, and would not let him go.

Theseus wished to go forwards: but he was ashamed to seem churlish to so hospitable a man; and he was curious to see that wondrous bed; and beside, he was hungry and weary: yet he shrank from the man, he knew not why; for, though his voice was gentle and fawning, it was dry and husky like a toad's; and though his eyes were gentle, they were dull and cold like stones. But he consented, and went with the man up a glen which led from the road toward the peaks of Parnes, under the dark shadow of the cliffs.

And as they went up, the glen grew narrower, and

the cliffs higher and darker, and beneath them a torrent roared, half seen between bare limestone crags. And around them was neither tree nor bush, while from the white peaks of Parnes the snow-blasts swept down the glen, cutting and chilling, till a horror fell on Theseus as he looked round at that doleful place. And he asked at last, " Your castle stands, it seems, in a dreary region."



" Yes ; but once within it, hospitality makes all things cheerful. But who are these ? " and he looked back, and Theseus also ; and far below, along the road which they had left, came a string of laden asses, and merchants walking by them, watching their ware.

" Ah, poor souls ! " said the stranger. " Well for them that I looked back and saw them ! And well for me too, for I shall have the more guests at my feast. Wait awhile till I go down and call them, and

we will eat and drink together the livelong night. Happy am I, to whom Heaven sends so many guests at once ! "

And he ran back down the hill, waving his hand and shouting to the merchants, while Theseus went slowly up the steep pass.

But as he went up he met an aged man, who had been gathering driftwood in the torrent-bed. He had laid down his faggot in the road, and was trying to lift it again to his shoulder. And when he saw Theseus, he called to him, and said,—

" O fair youth, help me up with my burden, for my limbs are stiff and weak with years."

Then Theseus lifted the burden on his back. And the old man blest him, and then looked earnestly upon him, and said,—

" Who are you, fair youth, and wherefore travel you this doleful road ? "

" Who I am my parents know ; but I travel this doleful road because I have been invited by a hospitable man, who promises to feast me, and to make me sleep upon I know not what wondrous bed."

Then the old man clapped his hands together and cried,—

" O house of Hades, man-devouring ! will thy maw never be full ? Know, fair youth, that you are going to torment and to death, for he who met you (I will requite your kindness by another) is a robber and a murderer of men. Whatsoever stranger he meets he entices him hither to death ; and as for this bed of which he speaks, truly it fits all comers, yet none ever rose alive off it save me."

" Why ? " asked Theseus, astonished.

" Because, if a man be too tall for it, he lops his limbs till they be short enough, and if he be too short, he stretches his limbs till they be long enough ; but me only he spared, seven weary years agone ; for I alone of all fitted his bed exactly, so he spared me,

and made me his slave. And once I was a wealthy merchant, and dwelt in brazen-gated Thebes; but now I hew wood and draw water for him, the torment of all mortal men."

Then Theseus said nothing; but he ground his teeth together.

"Escape, then," said the old man, "for he will have no pity on thy youth. He is called Procrustes the stretcher, though his father called him Damastes. Flee from him: yet whither will you flee? The cliffs are steep, and who can climb them? and there is no other road."

But Theseus laid his hand upon the old man's mouth, and said, "There is no need to flee;" and he turned to go down the pass.

"Do not tell him that I have warned you, or he will kill me by some evil death;" and the old man screamed after him down the glen; but Theseus strode on in his wrath.

And he said to himself, "This is an ill-ruled land; when shall I have done ridding it of monsters?" And as he spoke, Procrustes came up the hill and all the merchants with him, smiling and talking gaily. And when he saw Theseus, he cried, "Ah, fair young guest, have I kept you too long waiting?"

But Theseus answered, "The man who stretches his guests upon a bed and hews off their hands and feet, what shall be done to him, when right is done throughout the land?"

Then Procrustes' countenance changed, and his cheeks grew as green as a lizard, and he felt for his sword in haste; but Theseus leapt on him, and cried,—

"Is this true, my host, or is it false?" and he clasped Procrustes round waist and elbow, so that he could not draw his sword.

"Is this true, my host, or is it false?" But Procrustes answered never a word.

Then Theseus flung him from him, and lifted up his dreadful club ; and before Procrustes could strike him he had struck, and felled him to the ground.

And once again he struck him ; and his evil soul fled forth, and went down to Hades squeaking, like a bat into the darkness of a cave.

Then Theseus stript him of his gold ornaments, and went up to his house, and found there great wealth and treasure, which he had stolen from the passers-by. And he called the people of the country, whom Procrustes had spoiled a long time, and parted the spoil among them, and went down the mountains, and away.

And he went down the glens of Parnes, through mist, and cloud, and rain, down the slopes of oak, and lentisk, and arbutus, and fragrant bay, till he came to the Vale of Cephisus, and the pleasant town of Aphidnai, and the home of the Phytalid heroes, where they dwelt beneath a mighty elm.

And there they built an altar, and bade him bathe in Cephisus, and offer a yearling ram, and purified him from the blood of Sinis, and sent him away in peace.

And he went down the valley by Acharnai, and by the silver-swirling stream, while all the people blessed him, for the fame of his prowess had spread wide, till he saw the plain of Athens, and the hill where Athené dwells.

So Theseus went up through Athens, and all the people ran out to see him ; for his fame had gone before him, and every one knew of his mighty deeds. And all cried, " Here comes the hero who slew Sinis, and Phaia the wild sow of Crommyon, and conquered Kerkuon in wrestling, and slew Procrustes the pitiless." But Theseus went on sadly and steadfastly, for his heart yearned after his father ; and he said, " How shall I deliver him from these leeches who suck his blood ? "

So he went up the holy stairs, and into the Acropolis,

where Ægeus' palace stood ; and he went straight into Ægeus' hall, and stood upon the threshold, and looked round.

And there he saw his cousins sitting about the table at the wine : many a son of Pallas, but no Ægeus among them. There they sat and feasted, and laughed, and passed the wine-cup round ; while harpers harped, and slave-girls sang, and the tumblers showed their tricks.

Loud laughed the sons of Pallas, and fast went the wine-cup round ; but Theseus frowned, and said under his breath, " No wonder that the land is full of robbers, while such as these bear rule."

Then the Pallantids saw him, and called to him, half-drunk with wine, " Holla, tall stranger at the door, what is your will to-day ? "

" I come hither to ask for hospitality."

" Then take it, and welcome. You look like a hero and a bold warrior ; and we like such to drink with us."

" I ask no hospitality of you ; I ask it of Ægeus the king, the master of this house."

At that some growled, and some laughed, and shouted, " Heyday ! we are all masters here."

" Then I am master as much as the rest of you," said Theseus, and he strode past the table up the hall, and looked around for Ægeus ; but he was nowhere to be seen.

The Pallantids looked at him, and then at each other ; and each whispered to the man next him, " This is a forward fellow ; he ought to be thrust out at the door." But each man's neighbour whispered in return, " His shoulders are broad ; will you rise and put him out ? " So they all sat still where they were.

Then Theseus called to the servants, and said, " Go tell King Ægeus, your master, that Theseus of Trœzene is here, and asks to be his guest awhile."

A servant ran and told Ægeus, where he sat in his chamber within, by Medeia the dark witch-woman, watching her eye and hand. And when Ægeus heard of Trœzene he turned pale and red again, and rose from his seat trembling, while Medeia watched him like a snake.

"What is Trœzene to you?" she asked. But he said hastily, "Do you not know who this Theseus is? The hero who has cleared the country from all monsters; but that he came from Trœzene, I never heard before. I must go out and welcome him."

So Ægeus came out into the hall; and when Theseus saw him, his heart leapt into his mouth, and he longed to fall on his neck and welcome him; but he controlled himself, and said, "My father may not wish for me, after all. I will try him before I discover myself;" and he bowed low before Ægeus, and said, "I have delivered the king's realm from many monsters; therefore I am come to ask a reward of the king."

And old Ægeus looked on him, and loved him, as what fond heart would not have done? But he only sighed, and said,—

"It is little that I can give you, noble lad, and nothing that is worthy of you; for surely you are no mortal man, or at least no mortal's son."

"All I ask," said Theseus, "is to eat and drink at your table."

"That I can give you," said Ægeus, "if at least I am master in my own hall."

Then he bade them put a seat for Theseus, and set before him the best of the feast; and Theseus sat and ate so much, that all the company wondered at him: but always he kept his club by his side.

But Medeia the dark witch-woman had been watching him all the while. She saw how Ægeus turned red and pale when the lad said that he came from Trœzene. She saw, too, how his heart was opened toward Theseus; and how Theseus bore himself before

all the sons of Pallas, like a lion among a pack of curs. And she said to herself, " This youth will be master here ; perhaps he is nearer to Ægeus already than mere fancy. At least the Pallantids will have no chance by the side of such as he."

Then she went back into her chamber modestly, while Theseus ate and drank ; and all the servants whispered, " This, then, is the man who killed the monsters ! How noble are his looks, and how huge his size ! Ah, would that he were our master's son ! "

But presently Medeia came forth, decked in all her jewels, and her rich Eastern robes, and looking more beautiful than the day, so that all the guests could look at nothing else. And in her right hand she held a golden cup, and in her left a flask of gold ; and she came up to Theseus, and spoke in a sweet, soft, winning voice,—

" Hail to the hero, the conqueror, the unconquered, the destroyer of all evil things ! Drink, hero, of my charmed cup, which gives rest after every toil, which heals all wounds, and pours new life into the veins. Drink of my cup, for in it sparkles the wine of the East, and Nepenthe, the comfort of the Immortals."

And as she spoke she poured the flask into the cup ; and the fragrance of the wine spread through the hall, like the scent of thyme and roses.

And Theseus looked up in her fair face and into her deep dark eyes. And as he looked, he shrank and shuddered ; for they were dry like the eyes of a snake. And he rose and said, " The wine is rich and fragrant, and the wine-bearer as fair as the Immortals ; but let her pledge me first herself in the cup, that the wine may be the sweeter from her lips."

Then Medeia turned pale, and stammered, " Forgive me, fair hero ; but I am ill, and dare drink no wine."

And Theseus looked again into her eyes, and cried, " Thou shalt pledge me in that cup, or die." And he

lifted up his brazen club, while all the guests looked on aghast.

Medeia shrieked a fearful shriek, and dashed the cup to the ground, and fled; and where the wine flowed over the marble pavement, the stone bubbled, and crumpled, and hissed, under the fierce venom of the draught.

But Medeia called her dragon chariot, and sprang into it and fled aloft, away over land and sea, and no man saw her more.

And Ægeus cried, "What hast thou done?" But Theseus pointed to the stone, "I have rid the land of an enchantment: now I will rid it of one more."

And he came close to Ægeus, and drew from his bosom the sword and the sandals, and said the words which his mother bade him.

And Ægeus stepped back a pace, and looked at the lad till his eyes grew dim; and then he cast himself on his neck and wept, and Theseus wept on his neck, till they had no strength left to weep more.

Then Ægeus turned to all the people, and cried, "Behold my son, children of Kekrops, a better man than his father was before him."

Who, then, were mad but the Pallantids, though they had been mad enough before? And one shouted, "Shall we make room for an upstart, a pretender, who comes from we know not where?" And another, "If he be one, we are more than one; and the stronger can hold his own." And one shouted one thing, and one another; for they were hot and wild with wine: but all caught swords and lances off the wall, where the weapons hung around, and sprang forward to Theseus, and Theseus sprang forward to them.

And he cried, "Go in peace, if you will, my cousins; but if not, your blood be on your own heads." But they rushed at him; and then stopped short

and railed him, as curs stop and bark when they rouse a lion from his lair.

But one hurled a lance from the rear rank, which passed close by Theseus' head ; and at that Theseus rushed forward, and the fight began indeed. Twenty against one they fought, and yet Theseus beat them all ; and those who were left fled down into the town, where the people set on them, and drove them out, till Theseus was left alone in the palace, with Ægeus his new-found father. But before nightfall all the town came up, with victims, and dances, and songs ; and they offered sacrifices to Athené, and rejoiced all the night long, because their king had found a noble son, and an heir to his royal house.

So Theseus stayed with his father all the winter ; and when the spring equinox drew near, all the Athenians grew sad and silent, and Theseus saw it, and asked the reason ; but no one would answer him a word.

Then he went to his father, and asked him ; but Ægeus turned away his face and wept.

" Do not ask, my son, beforehand, about evils which must happen ; it is enough to have to face them when they come."

And when the spring equinox came, a herald came to Athens, and stood in the market, and cried, " O people and king of Athens, where is your yearly tribute ? " Then a great lamentation arose throughout the city. But Theseus stood up to the herald, and cried,—

" And who are you, dog-faced, who dare demand tribute here ? If I did not reverence your herald's staff, I would brain you with this club."

And the herald answered proudly, for he was a grave and ancient man,—

" Fair youth, I am not dog-faced or shameless ; but I do my master's bidding, Minos, the king of hundred-citied Crete, the wisest of all kings on earth.

And you must be surely a stranger here, or you would know why I come, and that I come by right."

"I am a stranger here. Tell me, then, why you come."

"To fetch the tribute which King Ægeus promised to Minos, and confirmed his promise with an oath. For Minos conquered all this land, and Megara which lies to the east, when he came hither with a great fleet of ships, enraged about the murder of his son. For his son Androgeos came hither to the Panathenaic games, and overcame all the Greeks in the sports, so that the people honoured him as a hero. But when Ægeus saw his valour, he envied him, and feared lest he should join the sons of Pallas, and take away the sceptre from him. So he plotted against his life, and slew him basely, no man knows how or where. Some say that he waylaid him, on the road which goes to Thebes; and some that he sent him against the bull of Marathon, that the beast might kill him. But Ægeus says that the young men killed him from envy, because he had conquered them in the games. So Minos came hither and avenged him, and would not depart till this land had promised him tribute—seven youths and seven maidens every year, who go with me in a black-sailed ship, till they come to hundred-citied Crete."

And Theseus ground his teeth together, and said, "Wert thou not a herald I would kill thee for saying such things of my father; but I will go to him, and know the truth." So he went to his father, and asked him; but he turned away his head and wept, and said, "Blood was shed in the land unjustly, and by blood it is avenged. Break not my heart by question; it is enough to endure in silence."

Then Theseus groaned inwardly, and said, "I will go myself with these youths and maidens, and kill Minos upon his royal throne."

And Ægeus shrieked, and cried, "You shall not go,



So they went down to the black-sailed ship.

my son, the light of my old age, to whom alone I look to rule this people after I am dead and gone. You shall not go, to die horribly, as these youths and maidens die ; for Minos thrusts them into a labyrinth, which Daidalos made for him among the rocks,— Daidalos the renegade, the accursed, the pest of this his native land. From that labyrinth no one can escape, entangled in its winding ways, before they meet the Minotaur, the monster who feeds upon the flesh of men. There he devours them horribly, and they never see this land again."

Then Theseus grew red, and his ears tingled, and his heart beat loud in his bosom. And he stood awhile like a tall stone pillar on the cliffs above some hero's grave ; and at last he spoke,—

" Therefore all the more I will go with them, and slay the accursed beast. Have I not slain all evil-doers and monsters, that I might free this land ? Where are Periphetes, and Sinis, and Kerkuon, and Phaia the wild sow ? Where are the fifty sons of Pallas ? And this Minotaur shall go the road which they have gone, and Minos himself, if he dare stay me."

" But how will you slay him, my son ? For you must leave your club and your armour behind, and be cast to the monster, defenceless and naked like the rest."

And Theseus said, " Are there no stones in that labyrinth ; and have I not fists and teeth ? Did I need my club to kill Kerkuon, the terror of all mortal men ? "

Then Ægeus clung to his knees ; but he would not hear ; and at last he let him go, weeping bitterly, and said only this one word,—

" Promise me but this, if you return in peace, though that may hardly be : take down the black sail of the ship (for I shall watch for it all day upon the cliffs), and hoist instead a white sail, that I may know afar off that you are safe."

And Theseus promised, and went out, and to the market-place where the herald stood, while they drew lots for the youths and maidens, who were to sail in that doleful crew. And the people stood wailing and weeping, as the lot fell on this one and on that; but Theseus strode into the midst, and cried,—

"Here is a youth who needs no lot. I myself will be one of the seven."

And the herald asked in wonder, "Fair youth, know you whither you are going?"

And Theseus said, "I know. Let us go down to the black-sailed ship."

So they went down to the black-sailed ship, seven maidens, and seven youths, and Theseus before them all, and the people following them lamenting. But Theseus whispered to his companions, "Have hope, for the monster is not immortal. Where are Periphetes, and Sinis, and Sciron, and all whom I have slain?" Then their hearts were comforted a little; but they wept as they went on board, and the cliffs of Sunium rang, and all the isles of the Ægean Sea, with the voice of their lamentation, as they sailed on toward their deaths in Crete.

Part III

HOW THESEUS SLEW THE MINOTAUR

And at last they came to Crete, and to Cnossus, beneath the peaks of Ida, and to the palace of Minos the great king, to whom Zeus himself taught laws. So he was the wisest of all mortal kings, and conquered all the Ægean isles ; and his ships were as many as the sea-gulls, and his palace like a marble hill. And he sat among the pillars of the hall, upon his throne of beaten gold, and around him stood the speaking statues which Daidalos had made by his skill. For Daidalos was the most cunning of all Athenians, and he first invented the plumb-line, and the auger, and glue, and many a tool with which wood is wrought. And he first set up masts in ships, and yards, and his son made sails for them : but Perdix his nephew excelled him ; for he first invented the saw and its teeth, copying it from the back-bone of a fish ; and invented, too, the chisel, and the compasses, and the potter's wheel which moulds the clay. Therefore Daidalos envied him, and hurled him headlong from the temple of Athené ; but the Goddess pitied him (for she loves the wise), and changed him into a partridge, which flits for ever about the hills. And Daidalos fled to Crete, to Minos, and worked for him many a year, till he did a shameful deed, at which the sun hid his face on high.

Then he fled from the anger of Minos, he and Icaros his son, having made themselves wings of feathers, and

fixed the feathers with wax. So they flew over the sea toward Sicily ; but Icaros flew too near the sun ; and the wax of his wings was melted, and he fell into the Icarian Sea. But Daidalos came safe to Sicily, and there wrought many a wondrous work ; for he made for King Cocalos a reservoir, from which a great river watered all the land, and a castle and a treasury on a mountain, which the giants themselves could not have stormed ; and in Selinos he took the steam which comes up from the fires of Ætna, and made of it a warm bath of vapour, to cure the pains of mortal men ; and he made a honeycomb of gold, in which the bees came and stored their honey, and in Egypt he made the forecourt of the temple of Hephaistos in Memphis, and a statue of himself within it, and many another wondrous work. And for Minos he made statues which spoke and moved, and the temple of Britomartis, and the dancing-hall of Ariadne, which he carved of fair white stone. And in Sardinia he worked for Iölaos, and in many a land beside, wandering up and down for ever with his cunning, unlovely and accursed by men.

But Theseus stood before Minos, and they looked each other in the face. And Minos bade take them to prison, and cast them to the monster one by one, that the death of Androgeos might be avenged. Then Theseus cried,—

" A boon, O Minos ! Let me be thrown first to the beast. For I came hither for that very purpose, of my own will, and not by lot."

" Who art thou, then, brave youth ? "

" I am the son of him whom of all men thou hatest most, Ægeus the king of Athens, and I am come here to end this matter."

And Minos pondered awhile, looking steadfastly at him, and he thought, " The lad means to atone by his own death for his father's sin ; " and he answered at last mildly,—

" Go back in peace, my son. It is a pity that one so brave should die."

But Theseus said, " I have sworn that I will not go back till I have seen the monster face to face."

And at that Minos frowned, and said, " Then thou shalt see him ; take the madman away."

And they led Theseus away into the prison, with the other youths and maids.

But Ariadne, Minos' daughter, saw him, as she came out of her white stone hall ; and she loved him for his courage and his majesty, and said, " Shame that such a youth should die ! " And by night she went down to the prison, and told him all her heart ; and said,—

" Flee down to your ship at once, for I have bribed the guards before the door. Flee, you and all your friends, and go back in peace to Greece ; and take me, take me with you ! for I dare not stay after you are gone ; for my father will kill me miserably, if he knows what I have done."

And Theseus stood silent awhile ; for he was astonished and confounded by her beauty : but at last he said, " I cannot go home in peace, till I have seen and slain this Minotaur, and avenged the deaths of the youths and maidens, and put an end to the terrors of my land."

" And will you kill the Minotaur ? How, then ? "

" I know not, nor do I care : but he must be strong if he be too strong for me."

Then she loved him all the more, and said, " But when you have killed him, how will you find your way out of the labyrinth ? "

" I know not, neither do I care : but it must be a strange road, if I do not find it out before I have eaten up the monster's carcase."

Then she loved him all the more, and said,—

" Fair youth, you are too bold ; but I can help you, weak as I am. I will give you a sword, and with that perhaps you may slay the beast ; and a clue of thread,



All the while he held his clue.

and by that, perhaps, you may find your way out again. Only promise me that if you escape safe you will take me home with you to Greece; for my father will surely kill me, if he knows what I have done."

Then Theseus laughed, and said, "Am I not safe enough now?" And he hid the sword in his bosom, and rolled up the clue in his hand; and then he swore to Ariadne, and fell down before her, and kissed her hands and her feet; and she wept over him a long while, and then went away; and Theseus lay down and slept sweetly.

And when the evening came, the guards came in and led him away to the labyrinth.

And he went down into that doleful gulf, through winding paths among the rocks, under caverns, and arches, and galleries, and over heaps of fallen stone. And he turned on the left hand, and on the right hand, and went up and down till his head was dizzy; but all the while he held his clue. For when he went in he had fastened it to a stone, and left it to unroll out of his hand as he went on; and it lasted him till he met the Minotaur, in a narrow chasm between black cliffs.

And when he saw him he stopped awhile, for he had never seen so strange a beast. His body was a man's: but his head was the head of a bull; and his teeth were the teeth of a lion, and with them he tore his prey. And when he saw Theseus he roared, and put his head down, and rushed right at him.

But Theseus stept aside nimbly, and as he passed by, cut him in the knee; and ere he could turn in the narrow path, he followed him, and stabbed him again and again from behind, till the monster fled bellowing wildly; for he never before had felt a wound. And Theseus followed him at full speed, holding the clue of thread in his left hand.

Then on, through cavern after cavern, under dark ribs of sounding stone, and up rough glens and torrent-beds, among the sunless roots of Ida, and to the edge

of the eternal snow, went they, the hunter and the hunted, while the hills bellowed to the monster's bellow.

And at last Theseus came up with him, where he lay panting on a slab among the snow, and caught him by the horns, and forced his head back, and drove the keen sword through his throat.

Then he turned, and went back limping and weary, feeling his way down by the clue of thread, till he came to the mouth of that doleful place ; and saw waiting for him, whom but Ariadne !

And he whispered, " It is done ! " and showed her the sword ; and she laid her finger on her lips, and led him to the prison, and opened the doors, and set all the prisoners free, while the guards lay sleeping heavily ; for she had silenced them with wine.

Then they fled to their ship together, and leapt on board, and hoisted up the sail ; and the night lay dark around them, so that they passed through Minos' ships, and escaped all safe to Naxos ; and there Ariadne became Theseus' wife.

Part IV

HOW THESEUS FELL BY HIS PRIDE

But that fair Ariadne never came to Athens with her husband. Some say that Theseus left her sleeping on Naxos among the Cyclades; and that Dionysos the wine-king found her, and took her up into the sky, as you shall see some day in a painting of old Titian's—one of the most glorious pictures upon earth. And some say that Dionysos drove away Theseus, and took Ariadne from him by force: but however that may be, in his haste or in his grief, Theseus forgot to put up the white sail. Now Ægeus his father sat and watched on Sunium day after day, and strained his old eyes across the sea to see the ship afar. And when he saw the black sail, and not the white one, he gave up Theseus for dead, and in his grief he fell into the sea, and died; so it is called the Ægean to this day.

And now Theseus was king of Athens, and he guarded it and ruled it well.

For he killed the bull of Marathon, which had killed Androgeos, Minos' son; and he drove back the famous Amazons, the warlike women of the East, when they came from Asia, and conquered all Hellas, and broke into Athens itself. But Theseus stopped them there, and conquered them, and took Hippolyte their queen to be his wife. Then he went out to fight against the Lapithai, and Peirithoos their famous king; but when the two heroes came face to face they loved each other, and embraced, and became noble friends; so that the

friendship of Theseus and Peirithoos is a proverb even now. And he gathered (so the Athenians say) all the boroughs of the land together, and knit them into one strong people, while before they were all parted and weak: and many another wise thing he did, so that his people honoured him after he was dead, for many a hundred years, as the father of their freedom and their laws. And six hundred years after his death, in the famous fight at Marathon, men said that they saw the ghost of Theseus, with his mighty brazen club, fighting in the van of battle against the invading Persians, for the country which he loved. And twenty years after Marathon his bones (they say) were found in Scyros, an isle beyond the sea; and they were bigger than the bones of mortal man. So the Athenians brought them home in triumph; and all the people came out to welcome them; and they built over them a noble temple, and adorned it with sculptures and paintings; in which we are told all the noble deeds of Theseus, and the Centaurs, and the Lapithai, and the Amazons; and the ruins of it are standing still.

But why did they find his bones in Scyros? Why did he not die in peace at Athens, and sleep by his father's side? Because after his triumph he grew proud, and broke the laws of God and man. And one thing worst of all he did, which brought him to his grave with sorrow. For he went down (they say beneath the earth) with that bold Peirithoos his friend to help him to carry off Persephone, the queen of the world below. But Peirithoos was killed miserably, in the dark fire-kingdoms under ground; and Theseus was chained to a rock in everlasting pain. And there he sat for years till Heracles the mighty came down to bring up the three-headed dog who sits at Pluto's gate. So Heracles loosed him from his chain, and brought him up to the light once more.

But when he came back his people had forgotten him, and Castor and Polydeuces, the sons of the won-

drous Swan, had invaded his land, and carried off his mother Aithra for a slave, in revenge for a grievous wrong.

So the fair land of Athens was wasted, and another king ruled it, who drove out Theseus shamefully, and he fled across the sea to Scyros. And there he lived in sadness, in the house of Lucomedes the king, till Lucomedes killed him by treachery, and there was an end of all his labours.

So it is still, my children, and so it will be to the end. In those old Greeks, and in us also, all strength and virtue come from God. But if men grow proud and self-willed, and misuse God's fair gifts, He lets them go their own ways, and fall pitifully, that the glory may be His alone. God help us all, and give us wisdom and courage to do noble deeds! but God keep pride from us when we have done them, lest we fall, and come to shame!

POETICAL SELECTIONS

ANDROMEDA

(*By Charles Kingsley*)

Over the sea, past Crete, on the Syrian shore to the southward,
Dwells in the well-tilled lowland a dark-haired Æthiop people,
Skilful with needle and loom, and the arts of the dyer and carver,
Skilful, but feeble of heart; for they know not the lords of Olympus,
Lovers of men; neither broad-browed Zeus, nor Pallas Athené,
Teacher of wisdom to heroes, bestower of might in the battle;
Share not the cunning of Hermes, nor list to the songs of Apollo.
Fearing the stars of the sky, and the roll of the blue salt water,
Fearing all things that have life in the womb of the seas and the rivers,
Eating no fish to this day, nor ploughing the main, like the Phœnics,
Manful with black-beaked ships, they abide in a sorrowful region,
Vexed with the earthquake, and flame, and the sea-floods, scourge of Poseidon.
Whelming the dwellings of men, and the toils of the slow-footed oxen,
Drowning the barley and flax, and the hard-earned gold of the harvest,

Up to the hillside vines, and the pastures skirting the woodland,
Inland the floods came yearly ; and after the waters a monster,
Bred of the slime, like the worms which are bred from the muds of the Nile-bank,
Shapeless, a terror to see ; and by night it swam out to the seaward,
Daily returning to feed with the dawn, and devoured of the fairest,
Cattle, and children, and maids, till the terrified people fled inland.
Fasting in sackcloth and ashes they came, both the king and his people,
Came to the mountain of oaks, to the house of the terrible sea-gods,
Hard by the gulf in the rocks, where of old the world-wide deluge
Sank to the inner abyss ; and the lake where the fish of the goddess,
Holy, undying, abide ; whom the priests feed daily with dainties.
There to the mystical fish, high-throned in her chamber of cedar,
Burnt they the fat of the flock ; till the flame shone far to the seaward.
Three days fasting they prayed ; but the fourth day the priests of the goddess,
Cunning in spells, cast lots, to discover the crime of the people.
All day long they cast, till the house of the monarch was taken,
Cepheus, king of the land ; and the faces of all gathered blackness.
Then once more they cast ; and Cassiopœia was taken,
Deep-bosomed wife of the king, whom oft far-seeing Apollo

Watched well-pleased from the welkin, the fairest of
Æthiop women:
Fairest, save only her daughter; for down to the
ankle her tresses
Rolled, blue-black as the night, ambrosial, joy to
beholders.
Awful and fair she arose, most like in her coming to
Here,
Queen before whom the Immortals arise, as she comes
on Olympus,
Out of the chamber of gold, which her son Hephæstos
has wrought her.
Such in her stature and eyes, and the broad white
light of her forehead.
Stately she came from her place, and she spoke in the
midst of the people.
"Pure are my hands from blood: most pure this
heart in my bosom.
Yet one fault I remember this day; one word have I
spoken;
Rashly I spoke on the shore, and I dread lest the sea
should have heard it.
Watching my child at her bath, as she plunged in the
joy of her girlhood,
Fairer I called her in pride than Atergati, queen of the
ocean.
Judge ye if this be my sin, for I know none other."
She ended;
Wrapping her head in her mantle she stood, and the
people were silent.
Answered the dark-browed priests, "No word, once
spoken, returneth,
Even if uttered unwitting. Shall gods excuse our
rashness?
That which is done, that abides; and the wrath of the
sea is against us;
Hers, and the wrath of her brother, the Sun-god, lord
of the sheepfolds.

Fairer than her hast thou boasted thy daughter? Ah folly! for hateful,
Hateful are they to the gods, whoso, impious, liken a mortal,
Fair though he be, to their glory; and hateful is that which is likened,
Grieving the eyes of their pride, and abominate, doomed to their anger.
What shall be likened to gods? The unknown, who deep in the darkness
Ever abide, twyformed, many-handed, terrible, shapeless.
Woe to the queen; for the land is defiled, and the people accursed.
Take thou her therefore by night, thou ill-starred Cassiopœia,
Take her with us in the night, when the moon sinks low to the westward;
Bind her aloft for a victim, a prey for the gorge of the monster,
Far on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever;
So may the goddess accept her, and so may the land make atonement,
Purged by her blood from its sin: so obey thou the doom of the rulers."
Bitter in soul they went out, Cepheus and Cassiopœia,
Bitter in soul; and their hearts whirled round, as the leaves in the eddy.
Weak was the queen, and rebelled: but the king, like a shepherd of people,
Willed not the land should waste; so he yielded the life of his daughter.
Deep in the wane of the night, as the moon sank low to the westward,
They by the shade of the cliffs, with the horror of darkness around them,

Stole, as ashamed, to a deed which became not the light of the sunshine,
Slowly, the priests, and the queen, and the virgin bound in the galley,
Slowly they rowed to the rocks: but Cepheus far in the palace
Sate in the midst of the hall, on his throne, like a shepherd of people,
Choking his woe, dry-eyed, while the slaves wailed loudly around him.
They on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever,
Set her in silence, the guiltless, aloft with her face to the eastward.
Under a crag of the stone, where a ledge sloped down to the water;
There they set Andromeden, most beautiful, shaped like a goddess,
Lifting her long white arms wide-spread to the walls of the basalt,
Chaining them, ruthless, with brass; and they called on the might of the Rulers.
"Mystical fish of the seas, dread Queen whom Æthiops honour,
Whelming the land in thy wrath, unavoidable, sharp as the sting-ray,
Thou, and thy brother the Sun, brain-smiting, lord of the sheepfold,
Scorching the earth all day, and then resting at night in thy bosom,
Take ye this one life for many, appeased by the blood of a maiden,
Fairest, and born of the fairest, a queen, most priceless of victims."
Thrice they spat as they went by the maid: but her mother delaying
Fondled her child to the last, heart-crushed; and the warmth of her weeping

Fell on the breast of the maid, as her woe broke forth into wailing.
" Daughter! my daughter! forgive me! Oh curse not the murderess! Curse not!
How have I sinned, but in love? Do the gods grudge glory to mothers?
Loving I bore thee in vain in the fate-cursed bride-bed of Cepheus,
Loving I fed thee and tended, and loving rejoiced in thy beauty,
Blessing thy limbs as I bathed them, and blessing thy locks as I combed them;
Decking thee, ripening to woman, I blest thee: yet blessing I slew thee!
How have I sinned, but in love? Oh swear to me, swear to thy mother,
Never to haunt me with curse, as I go to the grave in my sorrow,
Childless and lone: may the gods never send me another, to slay it!
See, I embrace thy knees—soft knees, where no babe will be fondled—
Swear to me never to curse me, the hapless one, not in the death-pang."
Weeping she clung to the knees of the maid; and the maid low answered—
" Curse thee! Not in the death-pang!" The heart of the lady was lightened.
Slowly she went by the ledge; and the maid was alone in the darkness.
Watching the pulse of the oars die down, as her own died with them,
Tearless, dumb with amaze she stood, as a storm-stunned nestling
Fallen from bough or from eave lies dumb, which the home-going herdsman
Fancies a stone, till he catches the light of its terrified eyeball.

So through the long long hours the maid stood helpless and hopeless,
Wide-eyed, downward gazing in vain at the black blank darkness.
Feebly at last she began, while wild thoughts bubbled within her—
" Guiltless I am : why thus, then ? Are gods more ruthless than mortals ?
Have they no mercy for youth ? no love for the souls who have loved them ?
Even as I loved thee, dread sea, as I played by thy margin,
Blessing thy wave as it cooled me, thy wind as it breathed on my forehead,
Bowing my head to thy tempest, and opening my heart to thy children,
Silvery fish, wreathed shell, and the strange lithe things of the water,
Tenderly casting them back, as they gasped on the beach in the sunshine,
Home to their mother—in vain ! for mine sits childless in anguish !
O false sea ! false sea ! I dreamed what I dreamed of thy goodness ;
Dreamed of a smile in thy gleam, of a laugh in the plash of thy ripple :
False and devouring thou art, and the great world dark and despiteful."
Awed by her own rash words she was still : and her eyes to the seaward
Looked for an answer of wrath : far off, in the heart of the darkness,
Bright white mists rose slowly ; beneath them the wandering ocean
Glimmered and glowed to the deepest abyss ; and the knees of the maiden
Trembled and sunk in her fear, as afar, like a dawn in the midnight,

Rose from their seaweed chamber the choir of the mystical sea-maids.
Onward toward her they came, and her heart beat loud at their coming,
Watching the bliss of the gods, as they wakened the cliffs with their laughter.
Onward they came in their joy, and before them the roll of the surges
Sank, as the breeze sank dead, into smooth green foam-flecked marble,
Awed ; and the crags of the cliff, and the pines of the mountain were silent.
Onward they came in their joy, and around them the lamps of the sea-nymphs,
Myriad fiery globes, swam panting and heaving ; and rainbows
Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-showers, lighting
Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the gardens of Nereus,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean.
Onward they came in their joy, more white than the foam which they scattered,
Laughing and singing, and tossing and twining, while eager, the Tritons
Blinded with kisses their eyes, unreproved, and above them in worship
Hovered the terns, and the sea-gulls swept past them on silvery pinions
Echoing softly their laughter ; around them the wantoning dolphins
Sighed as they plunged, full of love ; and the great sea-horses which bore them
Curved up their crests in their pride to the delicate arms of the maidens,
Pawing the spray into gems, till a fiery rainfall, unharming,

Sparkled and gleamed on the limbs of the nymphs, and the coils of the mermen.
Onward they went in their joy, bathed round with the fiery coolness,
Needing nor sun nor moon, self-lighted, immortal: but others,
Pitiful, floated in silence apart; in their bosoms the sea-boys,
Slain by the wrath of the seas, swept down by the anger of Nereus;
Hapless, whom never again on strand or on quay shall their mothers
Welcome with garlands and vows to the temple, but wearily pining
Gaze over island and bay for the sails of the sunken; they heedless
Sleep in soft bosoms for ever, and dream of the surge and the sea-maids.
Onward they passed in their joy; on their brows neither sorrow nor anger;
Self-sufficing, as gods, never heeding the woe of the maiden.
She would have shrieked for their mercy: but shame made her dumb; and their eyeballs
Stared on her careless and still, like the eyes in the house of the idols.
Seeing they saw not, and passed, like a dream, on the murmuring ripple.
Stunned by the wonder she gazed, wide-eyed, as the glory departed.
"O fair shapes! far fairer than I! Too fair to be ruthless!
Gladden mine eyes once more with your splendour, unlike to my fancies;
You, then, smiled in the sea-gleam, and laughed in the plash of the ripple.
Awful I deemed you and formless; inhuman, monstrous as idols;

Lo, when ye came, ye were women, more loving and
lovelier, only ;
Like in all else ; and I blest you : why blest ye not
me for my worship ?
Had you no mercy for me, the guiltless ? Ye pitied
the sea-boys :
Why not me, then, more hapless by far ? Does your
sight and your knowledge
End with the marge of the waves ? Is the world
which ye dwell in not our world ? "

Over the mountain aloft ran a rush and a roll and a
roaring ;
Downward the breeze came indignant, and leapt with
a howl to the water,
Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts
of the basalt
Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad
with the noises ;
Crashing and lapping of waters, and sighing and toss-
ing of weed-beds,
Gurgle and whisper and hiss of the foam, while
thundering surges
Boomed in the wave-worn halls, as they champed at
the roots of the mountain.
Hour after hour in the darkness the wind rushed fierce
to the landward,
Drenching the maiden with spray ; she shivering,
weary and drooping,
Stood with her heart full of thoughts, till the foam-
crests gleamed in the twilight,
Leaping and laughing around, and the east grew red
with the dawning.
Then on the ridge of the hills rose the broad bright
sun in his glory,
Hurling his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of
the surges,

Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs
of the coastland ;
Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced
teeth of the ledges,
Showing the maiden her home through the veil of her
locks, as they floated
Glistening, damp with the spray, in a long black cloud
to the landward.
High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the
homesteads ;
Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out-
going herdsman,
Slid to her ear on the water, and melted her heart into
weeping.
Shuddering, she tried to forget them ; and straining
her eyes to the seaward,
Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to
the terrible Sun-god.
" Dost thou not pity me, Sun, though thy wild dark
sister be ruthless ;
Dost thou not pity me here, as thou seest me desolate,
weary,
Sickened with shame and despair, like a kid torn
young from its mother ?
What if my beauty insult thee, then blight it : but
me—Oh spare me !
Spare me yet, ere he be here, fierce, tearing, unbear-
able ! See me,
See me, how tender and soft, and thus helpless ! See
how I shudder,
Fancying only my doom. Wilt thou shine thus bright,
when it takes me ?
Are there no deaths save this, great Sun ? No fiery
arrow,
Lightning, or deep-mouthed wave ? Why thus ? What
music in shrieking,
Pleasure in warm live limbs torn slowly ? And dar'st
thou behold them !

Oh, thou hast watched worse deeds! All sights are alike to thy brightness!
What if thou waken the birds to their song, dost thou waken no sorrow;
Waken no sick to their pain; no captive to wrench at his fetters?
Smile on the garden and fold, and on maidens who sing at the milking;
Flash into tapestried chambers, and peep in the eyelids of lovers,
Showing the blissful their bliss—Dost love, then, the place where thou smilest?
Lovest thou cities aflame, fierce blows, and the shrieks of the widow?
Lovest thou corpse-strewn fields, as thou lightest the path of the vulture?
Lovest thou these, that thou gazest so gay on my tears, and my mother's,
Laughing alike at the horror of one, and the bliss of another?
What dost thou care, in thy sky, for the joys and sorrows of mortals?
Colder art thou than the nymphs: in thy broad bright eye is no seeing.
Hadst thou a soul—as much soul as the slaves in the house of my father,
Wouldst thou not save? Poor thralls! they pitied me, clung to me weeping,
Kissing my hands and my feet—What, are gods more ruthless than mortals?
Worse than the souls which they rule? Let me die: they war not with ashes!"
Sudden she ceased, with a shriek: in the spray, like a hovering foam-bow,
Hung, more fair than the foam-bow, a boy in the bloom of his manhood,
Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial; over his shoulder

Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of the goat-skin,
Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear on its clearness.
Curved on his thigh lay a falchion, and under the gleam of his helmet
Eyes more blue than the main shone awful; around him Athené
Shed in her love such grace, such state, and terrible daring.
Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,
Living, a wonder, outgrown from the tight-laced gold of his sandals;
Bounding from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests like a sea-gull;
Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy of his leaping.
Fair and majestic he sprang to the rock; and the maiden in wonder
Gazed for a while, and then hid in the dark-rolling wave of her tresses,
Fearful, the light of her eyes; while the boy (for her sorrow had awed him)
Blushed at her blushes, and vanished, like mist on the cliffs at the sunrise.
Fearful at length she looked forth: he was gone: she, wild with amazement,
Wailed for her mother aloud: but the wail of the wind only answered.
Sudden he flashed into sight, by her side; in his pity and anger
Moist were his eyes; and his breath like a rose-bed, as bolder and bolder,
Hovering under her brows, like a swallow that haunts by the house-eaves,
Delicate-handed, he lifted the veil of her hair; while the maiden

Motionless, frozen with fear, wept loud ; till his lips unclosing
Poured from their pearl-strung portal the musical wave of his wonder.
" Ah, well spoke she, the wise one, the grey-eyed Pallas Athené,—
Known to Immortals alone are the prizes which lie for the heroes
Ready prepared at their feet ; for requiring a little, the rulers
Pay back the loan tenfold to the man who, careless of pleasure,
Thirsting for honour and toil, fares forth on a perilous errand
Led by the guiding of gods, and strong in the strength of Immortals.
Thus have they led me to thee : from afar, unknowing, I marked thee,
Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark-green walls of the sea-cliff ;
Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the craftsman.
Likeness of Amphitrité, or far-famed Queen Cythereia.
Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in the sea-wind,
Glistening, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow in thy wailing.
Speak again now—Oh speak ! For my soul is stirred to avenge thee ;
Tell me what barbarous horde, without law, unrighteous and heartless,
Hateful to gods and to men, thus have bound thee, a shame to the sunlight,
Scorn and prize to the sailor : but my prize now ; for a coward,
Coward and shameless were he, who so finding a glorious jewel

Cast on the wayside by fools, would not win it and keep it and wear it,
Even as I will thee ; for I swear by the head of my father,
Bearing thee over the sea-wave, to wed thee in Argos the fruitful,
Beautiful, meed of my toil no less than this head which I carry,
Hidden here fearful—Oh speak ! "

But the maid, still dumb with amazement,
Watered her bosom with weeping, and longed for her home and her mother.
Beautiful, eager, he wooed her, and kissed off her tears as he hovered,
Roving at will, as a bee, on the brows of a rock nymph-haunted,
Garlanded over with vine, and acanthus, and clambering roses,
Cool in the fierce still noon, where streams glance clear in the mossbeds,
Hums on from blossom to blossom, and mingles the sweets as he tastes them.
Beautiful, eager, he kissed her, and clasped her yet closer and closer,
Praying her still to speak—
" Not cruel nor rough did my mother
Bear me to broad-browed Zeus in the depths of the brass-covered dungeon ;
Neither in vain, as I think, have I talked with the cunning of Hermes,
Face unto face, as a friend ; or from grey-eyed Pallas Athené
Learnt what is fit, and respecting myself, to respect in my dealings
Those whom the gods should love ; so fear not ; to chaste espousals

Only I woo thee, and swear, that a queen, and alone without rival
By me thou sittest in Argos of Hellas, throne of my fathers,
Worshipped by fair-haired kings: why callest thou still on thy mother?
Why did she leave thee thus here? For no foeman has bound thee; no foeman
Winning with strokes of the sword such a prize, would so leave it behind him."
Just as at first some colt, wild-eyed, with quivering nostril,
Plunges in fear of the curb, and the fluttering robes of the rider;
Soon, grown bold by despair, submits to the will of his master,
Tamer and tamer each hour, and at last, in the pride of obedience,
Answers the heel with a curvet, and arches his neck to be fondled,
Cowed by the need that maid grew tame; while the hero indignant
Tore at the fetters which held her: the brass, too cunningly tempered,
Held to the rock by the nails, deep wedged: till the boy, red with anger,
Drew from his ivory thigh, keen flashing, a falchion of diamond—
"Now let the work of the smith try strength with the arms of Immortals!"
Dazzling it fell; and the blade, as the vine-hook shears off the vine-bough,
Carved through the strength of the brass, till her arms fell soft on his shoulder.
Once she essayed to escape: but the ring of the water was round her,
Round her the ring of his arms; and despairing she sank on his bosom.

Then, like a fawn when startled, she looked with a shriek to the seaward.
" Touch me not, wretch that I am ! For accursed, a shame and a hissing,
Guiltless, accurst no less, I await the revenge of the sea-gods.
Yonder it comes ! Ah go ! Let me perish unseen, if I perish !
Spare me the shame of thine eyes, when merciless fangs must tear me
Piecemeal ! Enough to endure by myself in the light of the sunshine
Guiltless, the death of a kid ! "
But the boy still lingered around her,
Loth, like a boy, to forego her, and waken the cliffs with his laughter.
" Yon is the foe, then ? A beast of the sea ? I had deemed him immortal.
Titan, or Proteus' self, or Nereus, foeman of sailors :
Yet would I fight with them all, but Poseidon, shaker of mountains,
Uncle of mine, whom I fear, as is fit ; for he haunts on Olympus,
Holding the third of the world ; and the gods all rise at his coming.
Unto none else will I yield, god-helped : how then to a monster,
Child of the earth and of night, unreasoning, shapeless, accursed ? "
" Art thou, too, then a god ? "
" No god I," smiling he answered ;
" Mortal as thou, yet divine : but mortal the herds of the ocean,
Equal to men in that only, and less in all else ; for they nourish
Blindly the life of the lips, untaught by the gods, without wisdom :
Shame if I fled before such ! "

In her heart new life was enkindled,
Worship and trust, fair parents of love: but she answered him sighing.
"Beautiful, why wilt thou die? Is the light of the sun, then, so worthless,
Worthless to sport with thy fellows in flowery glades of the forest,
Under the broad green oaks, where never again shall I wander,
Tossing the ball with my maidens, or wreathing the altar in garlands,
Careless, with dances and songs, till the glens rang loud to our laughter.
Too full of death the great earth is already: the halls full of weepers,
Quarried by tombs all cliffs, and the bones gleam white on the sea-floor,
Numberless, gnawn by the herds who attend on the pitiless sea-gods,
Even as mine will be soon: and yet noble it seems to me, dying,
Giving my life for the many, to save to the arms of their lovers
Maidens and youths for a while: thee, fairest of all, shall I slay thee?
Add not thy bones to the many, thus angering idly the dread ones!
Either the monster will crush, or the sea-queen's self overwhelm thee,
Vengeful, in tempest and foam, and the thundering walls of the surges.
Why wilt thou follow me down? can we love in the black blank darkness?
Love in the realms of the dead, in the land where all is forgotten?
Why wilt thou follow me down? is it joy, on the desolate oozes,

Meagre to flit, grey ghosts in the depths of the grey salt water?
Beautiful! why wilt thou die, and defraud fair girls of thy manhood?
Surely one waits for thee longing, afar in the isles of the ocean.
Go thy way; I mine; for the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Sobbing she ended her moan, as her neck, like a storm-bent lily,
Drooped with the weight of her woe, and her limbs sank, weary with watching,
Soft on the hard-ledged rock: but the boy, with his eye on the monster,
Clasped her, and stood, like a god; and his lips curved proud as he answered—
"Great are the pitiless sea-gods: but greater the Lord of Olympus;
Greater the Ægis-wielder, and greater is she who attends him.
Clear-eyed Justice her name is, the counsellor, loved of Athené;
Helper of heroes, who dare, in the god-given might of their manhood,
Greatly to do and to suffer, and far in the fens and the forests
Smite the devourers of men, Heaven-hated, brood of the giants,
Twyformed, strange, without like, who obey not the golden-haired Rulers.
Vainly rebelling they rage, till they die by the swords of the heroes,
Even as this must die; for I burn with the wrath of my father,
Wandering, led by Athené; and dare whatsoever betides me.
Led by Athené I won from the grey-haired terrible sisters

Secrets hidden from men, when I found them asleep
on the sand-hills,
Keeping their eye and their tooth, till they showed
me the perilous pathway
Over the waterless ocean, the valley that led to the
Gorgon.
Her too I slew in my craft, Medusa, the beautiful
horror;
Taught by Athené I slew her, and saw not herself, but
her image,
Watching the mirror of brass, in the shield which a
goddess had lent me.
Cleaving her brass-scaled throat, as she lay with her
adders around her,
Fearless I bore off her head, in the folds of the mystical
goat-skin
Hide of Amaltheié, fair nurse of the Ægis-wielder.
Hither I bear it, a gift to the gods, and a death to my
foemen,
Freezing the seer to stone; so hide thine eyes from
the horror.
Kiss me but once, and I go."
Then lifting her neck, like a sea-bird
Peering up over the wave, from the foam-white swells
of her bosom,
Blushing she kissed him: afar, on the topmost
Idalian summit
Laughed in the joy of her heart, far-seeing, the queen
Aphrodité.
Loosing his arms from her waist he flew upward,
awaiting the sea-beast.
Onward it came from the southward, as bulky and
black as a galley,
Lazily coasting along, as the fish fled leaping before it;
Lazily breasting the ripple, and watching by sandbar
and headland,
Listening for laughter of maidens at bleaching, or song
of the fisher,

Children at play on the pebbles, or cattle that pawed
on the sand-hills.
Rolling and dripping it came, where bedded in glisten-
ing purple
Cold on the cold sea-weeds lay the long white sides of
the maiden,
Trembling, her face in her hands, and her tresses
afloat on the water.
As when an osprey aloft, dark-eyebrowed, royally
crested,
Flags on by creek and by cove, and in scorn of the
anger of Nereus
Ranges, the king of the shore ; if he see on a glittering
shallow,
Chasing the bass and the mullet, the fin of a wallowing
dolphin,
Halting, he wheels round slowly, in doubt at the
weight of his quarry,
Whether to clutch it alive, or to fall on the wretch
like a plummet,
Stunning with terrible talon the life of the brain in
the hindhead :
Then rushes up with a scream, and stooping the wrath
of his eyebrows
Falls from the sky, like a star, while the wind rattles
hoarse in his pinions.
Over him closes the foam for a moment ; and then
from the sand-bed
Rolls up the great fish, dead, and his side gleams
white in the sunshine.
Thus fell the boy on the beast, unveiling the face of
the Gorgon ;
Thus fell the boy on the beast ; thus rolled up the
beast in his horror,
Once, as the dead eyes glared into his ; then his sides,
death-sharpened,
Stiffened and stood, brown rock, in the wash of the
wandering water.

Beautiful, eager, triumphant, he leapt back again to his treasure;
Leapt back again, full blest, toward arms spread wide to receive him.
Brimful of honour he clasped her, and brimful of love she caressed him,
Answering lip with lip; while above them the queen Aphrodité
Poured on their foreheads and limbs, unseen, ambrosial odours,
Givers of longing, and rapture, and chaste content in espousals.
Happy whom ere they be wedded anoints she, the Queen Aphrodité!
Laughing she called to her sister, the chaste Tritonid Athené,
"Seest thou yonder thy pupil, thou maid of the Ægis-wielder?
How he has turned himself wholly to love, and caresses a damsel,
Dreaming no longer of honour, or danger, or Pallas Athené?
Sweeter, it seems, to the young my gifts are; so yield me the stripling;
Yield him me now, lest he die in his prime, like hapless Adonis."
Smiling she answered in turn, that chaste Tritonid Athené:
"Dear unto me, no less than to thee, is the wedlock of heroes;
Dear, who can worthily win him a wife not unworthy; and noble,
Pure with the pure to beget brave children, the like of their father.
Happy, who thus stands linked to the heroes who were, and who shall be;
Girdled with holiest awe, not sparing of self; for his mother

Watches his steps with the eyes of the gods ; and his wife and his children
Move him to plan and to do in the farm and the camp and the council.
Thence comes weal to a nation : but woe upon woe, when the people
Mingle in love at their will, like the brutes, not heeding the future."
Then from her gold-strung loom, where she wrought in her chamber of cedar,
Awful and fair she arose ; and she went by the glens of Olympus ;
Went by the isles of the sea, and the wind never ruffled her mantle ;
Went by the water of Crete, and the black-beaked fleets of the Phœnics ;
Came to the sea-girt rock which is washed by the surges for ever,
Bearing the wealth of the gods, for a gift to the bride of a hero.
There she met Andromeden and Persea, shaped like Immortals ;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, while their hearts beat loud at her coming ;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, as she spoke to the pair in her wisdom.
" Three things hold we, the Rulers, who sit by the founts of Olympus,
Wisdom, and prowess, and beauty ; and freely we pour them on mortals ;
Pleased at our image in man, as a father at his in his children.
One thing only we grudge to mankind : when a hero, unthankful,
Boasts of our gifts as his own, stiffnecked, and dishonours the givers,
Turning our weapons against us. Him Até follows avenging ;

Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound ; sudden she grips him,
Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror to folly.
This we avenge, as is fit ; in all else never weary of giving.
Come, then, damsel, and know if the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Loving and gentle she spoke : but the maid stood in awe, as the goddess
Plaited with soft swift finger her tresses, and decked her in jewels,
Armlet and anklet and earbell ; and over her shoulders a necklace,
Heavy, enamelled, the flower of the gold and the brass of the mountain.
Trembling with joy she gazed, so well Hæphaistos had made it,
Deep in the forges of Ætna, while Charis his lady beside him
Mingled her grace in his craft, as he wrought for his sister Athené.
Then on the brows of the maiden a veil bound Pallas Athené ;
Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed, a wonder of weaving.
Ages and ages agone it was wrought on the heights of Olympus,
Wrought in the gold-strung loom, by the finger of cunning Athené.
In it she wove all creatures that teem in the womb of the ocean ;
Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin, and arrowy fishes
Glittering round, many-hued, on the flame-red folds of the mantle.
In it she wove, too, a town where grey-haired kings sat in judgment ;

Sceptre in hand in the market they sat, doing right by the people,
Wise ; while above watched Justice, and near, far-seeing Apollo.
Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs of the earth and the water,
Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves, roses and lilies,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean :
Now from Olympus she bore it, a dower to the bride of a hero.
Over the limbs of the damsel she wrapt it : the maid still trembled,
Shading her face with her hands ; for the eyes of the goddess were awful.
Then, as a pine upon Ida when south-west winds blow landward,
Stately she bent to the damsel, and breathed on her : under her breathing
Taller and fairer she grew ; and the goddess spoke in her wisdom.
" Courage I give thee ; the heart of a queen, and the mind of Immortals ;
Godlike to talk with the gods, and to look on their eyes unshrinking ;
Fearing the sun and the stars no more, and the blue salt water ;
Fearing us only, the lords of Olympus, friends of the heroes ;
Chastely and wisely to govern thyself and thy house and thy people,
Bearing a godlike race to thy spouse, till dying I set thee
High for a star in the heavens, a sign and a hope to the seamen,
Spreading thy long white arms all night in the heights of the æther,
Hard by thy sire and the hero thy spouse, while near thee thy mother

Sits in her ivory chair, as she plaits ambrosial tresses.
All night long thou wilt shine ; all day thou wilt feast on Olympus,
Happy, the guest of the gods, by thy husband, the god-begotten."
Blissful, they turned them to go : but the fair-tressed Pallas Athené
Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver Olympus ;
Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and the mainland ;
Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy Immortals.
Shrouded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable ; there ever youthful
Hebé, Harmonié, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodité,
Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand within hand, while clear piped Phœbe, queen of the woodlands.
All day long they rejoiced : but Athené still in her chamber
Bent herself over her loom, as the stars rang loud to her singing,
Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warden of nations ;
Chanting of labour and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner ;
Chanting of valour and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,
Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and solemnly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals :
Happy, who hearing obey her, the wise unsullied Athené.

THE RESCUE OF ANDROMEDA

(*From "The Doom of King Acrisius," by William Morris*)

Now at his side a wallet Perseus bore,
With threads of yellow gold embroidered o'er ;
Shuddering, therein he laid the fearful head,
Lest he unwitting yet might join the dead,
Or those he loved by sight of it be slain.
But strong fate led him to the Libyan plain,
Where, at the ending of a sultry day,
A palace huge and fair beneath him lay,
Whose roofs with silver plates were covered o'er ;
Then lighting down by its enormous door,
He heard unmeasured sounds of revelry,
And thought, " A fair place this will be for me,
Who lack both food and drink, and rest this night."
So turning to the ruddy flood of light,
Up the huge steps he toiled unto the hall ;
But even as his eager foot did fall
Upon the threshold, such a mocking shout
Rang in his ears as Etna sendeth out
When, at the day's end, round the smithy cold
The Cyclops some unmeasured banquet hold.
And monstrous men could he see sitting there,
Burnt by the sun, with length of straight back hair,
And taller far than men are wont to be ;
And at a gold-strewn dais could he see
A mighty King, a fearful man to face,
Brown-skinned and black-haired, of the giants' race,
Who seeing him, with thundering voice 'gan call,
" O Stranger, come forthwith into the hall,

Atlas would see thee ! " Forth stood Perseus then,
And going 'twixt the rows of uncouth men
Seemed but a pigmy ; but his heart was great,
And vain is might against the stroke of fate.
Then the King cried, " Who art thou, little one ?
Surely in thy land weak must be the sun
If there are bred such tender folk as thou :
May the gods grant such men are few enow !
Art thou a king's son ? " Loud he laughed withal,
And shouts of laughter rang throughout the hall,
Like clattering thunder on a July night.
But Perseus quailed not. " Little were my might,"
He said, " if helpless on the earth I were ;
But to the equal gods my life is dear,
And certes victory over Jove's own son
By earthly men shall not be lightly won."
So spake he, moving inward from the door,
But louder laughed the black king than before,
And all his people shouted at his beck ;
Therewith he cried, " Break now this Prince's neck,
And take him forth and hang him up straightway
Before my door, that henceforth from this day
Pigmies and jesters may take better heed,
Lest at our hands they gain a liar's meed."
Then started up two huge men from the board,
And Perseus, seeing them come, half drew his sword,
Looking this way and that ; but in a while,
Upon his wallet with a deadly smile
He set his hand, and forth the head he drew,
Dead, white midst golden hair, where serpents blue
Yet dangled dead ; and ere they stooped to take
His outstretched arms, before them he did shake
The dreadful thing : then stopped they suddenly,
Stone dead, without a wound or any cry.
Then toward the King he held aloft the head,
And as he stiffened cried at him, and said,
" O King ! when such a gift I bring to thee,
Wilt thou be dumb and neither hear nor see ?

Listen how sing thy men, and in thy hall
How swift the merry dancers' feet do fall ! "
For now these, thinking him some god to be,
Cried in their fear, and made great haste to flee,
Crowding about the great doors of the hall,
Until not one was left of great or small,
But the dead king, and those that there had died.
—Lo, in such way Medusa's head was tried !
But when the living giant-folk were gone,
And with the dead men there he stood alone,
He turned him to the food that thereby lay,
And ate and drank with none to say him nay ;
And on the floor at last he laid him down,
Midst heaps of unknown tawny skins and brown.
There all the night in dreamless sleep he lay,
But rose again at the first streak of day,
And looking round about rejoiced to see
The uncouth image of his enemy,
Silent for ever, with wide mouth agape
E'en as he died ; and thought, " Who now shall 'scape
When I am angry, while this gift I have ?
How well my needy lovers I may save
While this dread thing still hangeth by my side ! "
Then out he passed : a plain burnt up, and wide,
He saw before him, bare of any trees,
And much he longed for the green dashing seas,
And merry winds of the sweet island shore,
Fain of the gull's cry, for the lion's roar.
Yet, glad at heart, he lifted up his feet
From the parched earth, and soon the air did beat,
Going north-east, and flew forth all the day,
And when the night fell still was on the way ;
And many a sandy plain did he pass o'er,
And many a dry much-trodden river shore,
Where thick the thirsty beasts stood in the night.
The stealthy leopard saw him with affright,
As whining from the thicket it crept out ;
The lion drew back at his sudden shout

From off the carcass of some slaughtered beast ;
And the thin jackals waiting for the feast
Stinted their hungry howls as he passed by ;
And black men sleeping, as he came anigh
Dreamed ugly dreams, and reached their hands to seize
The spear or sword that lay across their knees.

So at the last the sea before him lay,
And yet, therefore, he made not any stay,
But flew on till the night began to wane,
And the grey sea was blue and green again ;
Until the sunlight on his wings shone fair,
And turned to red the gold locks of his hair.
Then in a little while he saw no land,
But all was heaving sea on every hand,
Driven this way and that way by the wind.
Still fast he flew, thinking some coast to find,
And so, about the middle of the day,
Far to the east a land before him lay,
And when unto it he was come anigh
He saw the sea beat on black cliffs and high,
With green grass growing on the tops of them,
Binding them round as gold a garment's hem.
Then slowly alongside thereof he flew
If haply by some sign the land he knew,
Until a ness he reached, whereon there stood
A tower new-built of mighty beams of wood ;
So nigh he came that, unseen, he could see
Pale haggard faces peering anxiously
From out its well-barred windows that looked forth
Into a bay that lay upon the north ;
But inland over moveless waves of down
Shone the white walls of some great royal town.
Now underneath the scarped cliffs of the bay
From horn to horn a belt of sand there lay
Fast lessening as the flood-tide swallowed it,
There all about did the sea-swallows flit,

And from the black rocks yellow hawks flew down,
And cormorants fished amidst the sea-weed brown,
Or on the low rocks nigh unto the sea,
While over all the fresh wind merrily
Blew from the sea, and o'er the pale blue sky
Thin clouds were stretched the way the wind went by,
And forward did the mighty waters press
As though they loved the green earth's stedfastness.
Nought slept, but everything was bright and fair
Beneath the bright sun and the noon-day air.
Now hovering there, he seemed to hear a sound
Unlike the sea-bird's cry, and, looking round,
He saw a figure standing motionless
Beneath the cliff, midway 'twixt ness and ness,
And as the wind lulled heard that cry again,
That sounded like the wail of one in pain ;
Wondering thereat, and seeking marvels new
He lighted down, and toward the place he drew,
And made invisible by Pallas' aid,
He came within the scarped cliff's purple shade,
And found a woman standing lonely there,
Naked, except for tresses of her hair
That o'er her white limbs by the breeze were wound,
And brazen chains her weary arms that bound
Unto the sea-beat overhanging rock,
As though her golden-crownèd head to mock.
But nigh her feet upon the sand there lay
Rich raiment that had covered her that day,
Worthy to be the ransom of a king,
Unworthy round such loveliness to cling.

Alas, alas ! no bridal play this was,
The tremors that throughout her limbs did pass,
Her restless eyes, the catching of her breath,
Were but the work of the cold hand of death,
She waited for, midst untold miseries,
As, now with head cast back, and close-shut eyes,

She wailed aloud, and now all spent with woe
Stared out across the rising sea, as though
She deemed each minute brought the end anigh
For which in her despair she needs must cry.

Then unseen Perseus stole anigh the maid,
And love upon his heart, a soft hand laid,
And tender pity rent it for her pain,
Nor yet an eager cry could he refrain,
As now, transformed by that piteous sight,
Grown like unto a god for pride and might,
Down on the sand the mystic cap he cast
And stood before her with flushed face at last,
And grey eyes glittering with his great desire
Beneath his hair, that like a harmless fire
Blown by the wind shone in her hopeless eyes.
But she, all rigid with her first surprise,
Ceasing her wailing as she heard his cry,
Stared at him, dumb with fear and misery,
Shrunk closer yet unto the rocky place
And writhed her bound hands as to hide her face ;
But sudden love his heart did so constrain,
With open mouth he strove to speak in vain
And from his heart the hot tears 'gan to rise ;
But she midst fear beheld his kind grey eyes,
And then, as hope came glimmering through her dread,
In a weak voice he scarce could hear, she said,
" O Death ! if thou hast risen from the sea,
Sent by the gods to end this misery,
I thank them that thou comest in this form,
Who rather thought to see a hideous worm
Come trailing up the sands from out the deep,
Or suddenly swing over from the steep
To lap me in his folds, and bone by bone
Crush all my body : come then, with no moan,
Will I make ready now to leave the light.
" But yet—thy face is wonderful and bright ;

Art thou a god ? Ah, then be kind to me !
Is there no valley far off from the sea
Where I may live alone, afar from strife
Nor anger any god with my poor life ?
Or do the gods delight in misery
And art thou come to mock me ere I die ?
Alas, must they be pitiless, when they
Fear not the hopeless slayer of the day !
Speak, speak ! what meanest thou by that sad smile ?
" O, if the gods could be but men awhile
And learn such fearful things unspeakable
As I have learned this morn, what man can tell
What golden age might wrap the world again—
Ah, dost thou love me, is my speech not vain ?
Did not my beauty perish on this morn,
Dost thou not kiss me now for very scorn ?
Alas, my shame, I cannot flee from thee !
Alas, my sin ! no green-stemmed laurel tree
Shall mock thy grasp, no misty mountain stream
Shall wake thee shuddering from a lovely dream,
No helping god shall hear, but thou alone !—
Help me, I faint ! I see not ! art thou gone ?
Alas ! thy lips were warm upon my brow,
What good deed will it be to leave me now !
" Oh, yet I feel thy kind and tender hand
On my chained wrist, and thou wilt find some land
Where I may live a little, free from fear ?
" And yet, and yet, if thou hast sought me here
Being but a man, no manly thing it is,
Nor hope thou from henceforth to live in bliss,
If here thou wrongest me, who am but dead."
Then as she might she hung adown her head,
Her bosom heaved with sobs, and from her eyes
Long dried amidst those hopeless miseries
Unchecked the salt tears o'er her bosom ran
As love and shame their varying strife began.
But overwhelmed with pity, mad with love
Stammering, nigh weeping spoke the son of Jove,—

" Alas, what land is this, where such as thou
Are thus tormented ? look upon me now,
And cease thy fear ! no evil man am I,
No cruel god to mock thy misery ;
But the gods help me, and their unmoved will
Has sent me here to save thee from some ill,
I know not what ; to give thee rest from this,
And unto me unutterable bliss,
If from a man thou takest not away
The gift thou gavest to a god to-day ;
But I may be a very god to thee,
Because the gods are helpful unto me,
Nor would I fear them aught if thou wert nigh,
Since unto each it happeneth once to die.
" Speak not, sweet maid, till I have loosed thine hands
From out the grasp of these unworthy bands."
So straight, and ere her lips could frame a word
From out its sheath he drew the gleaming sword,
And while she shut her dazzled eyes for fear
To see the glittering marvel draw anear,
Unto her side her weary arms fell freed ;
Then must she shrink away, for now indeed
With rest and hope and growing love there came
Remembrance of her helplessness and shame,
Weeping she said, " My fate is but to die,
Forget the wild words of my misery,
Take a poor maiden's thanks, and leave this place,
Nor for thy pity die before my face,
As verily thou wilt if thou stay'st here ;
Because, however free thou art from fear,
What hopest thou against this beast to do,
My death, and thine unconquerable foe ?
When all a kingdom's strength has had no hope
With this strange horror, God-endowed, to cope,
But deemed it good to give up one poor maid
Unto his wrath, who makes the world afraid."
" Nay," said he, " but thy fate shall be my fate,
And on these sands thy bane will I await,

Though I know nought of all his mightiness ;
For scarcely yet a man, I none the less
Such things have done as make me now a name,
Nor can I live a loveless life of shame,
Or leave thee now, this day's most god-like gain,
To suffer some unknown and mortal pain."

She, hurrying as he spoke, with trembling hands
Had lifted up her raiment from the sands,
And yet therewith she was not well arrayed,
Before she turned round, ghastly white, and said,
" Look seaward and behold, my death draw nigh,
Not thine—not thine—but kiss me ere I die ;
Alas ! how many things I had to tell,
For certainly I should have loved thee well."
He came to her and kissed her as she sank
Into his arms, and from the horror shrank,
Clinging to him, scarce knowing he was there ;
But through the drifting wonder of her hair,
Amidst his pity, he beheld the sea,
And saw a huge wave rising mightily
Above the smaller breakers of the shore,
Which in its green breast for a minute bore
A nameless horror, that it cast aland,
And left, a huge mass on the oozing sand,
That scarcely seemed a living thing to be,
Until at last those twain it seemed to see,
And gathering up its strange limbs, towards them passed.
And therewithal a dismal trumpet-blast
Rang from the tower, and from the distant town
The wind in answer brought loud wails adown.
Then Perseus gently put the maid from him,
Who sank down shivering in her every limb,
Silent despite herself for fear and woe,
As down the beach he ran to meet the foe.
But he, beholding Jove's son drawing near,
A great black fold against him did uprear,

Maned with grey tufts of hair, as some old tree
Hung round with moss, in lands where vapours be ;
From his bare skull his red eyes glowed like flame,
And from his open mouth a sound there came,
Strident and hideous, that still louder grew
As that rare sight of one in arms he knew :
But godlike, fearless, burning with desire,
The adamant jaws and lidless eyes of fire
Did Perseus mock, and lightly leapt aside
As forward did the torture-chamber glide
Of his huge head, and ere the best could turn,
One moment bright did blue-edged Herpe burn,
The next was quenched in the black flow of blood ;
Then in confusèd folds the hero stood,
His bright face shadowed by the jaws of death,
His hair blown backwards by the poisonous breath ;
But all that passed, like lightning-lighted street
In the dark night, as the blue blade did meet
The wrinkled neck, and with no faltering stroke,
Like a god's hand the fell enchantment broke,
And then again in place of crash and roar,
He heard the shallow breakers on the shore,
And o'er his head the sea-gull's plaintive cry,
Careless as gods for who might live or die.

Then Perseus from the slimy loathsome coil
Drew out his feet, and then with little toil
Smote off the head, the terror of the lands,
And, dragging it along, went up the sands,
Shouting aloud for joy, " Arise, arise,
O thou whose name I know not ! Ope thine eyes
To see the gift, that I, first seen to-day,
Am hastening now before thy feet to lay !
Look up, look up ! What shall thy sweet face be,
That I have seen amidst such misery,
When thou at last beginnest to rejoice."
Slowly she rose, her burdened heart found voice

In sobs and murmurs inarticulate,
And clean forgetting all the sport of fate,
She scarce could think that she should ever die,
As locked in fearless, loving, strait embrace,
They made a heaven of that lone sandy place.
Then on a rock smoothed by the washing sea
They sat, and eyed each other lovingly.
And few words at the first the maiden said,
So wrapped she was in all the goodlihead
Of her new life made doubly happy now :
For her alone the sea-breeze seemed to blow,
For her in music did the white surf fall,
For her alone the wheeling birds did call
Over the shallows, and the sky for her
Was set with white clouds, far away and clear ;
E'en as her love, this strong and lovely one
Who held her hand, was but for her alone.
But after loving silence for a while,
She, turning round to him her heavenly smile,
Said, " Tell me, O my love, what name is thine,
What mother brought thee forth so nigh divine,
Whence art thou come to take away my shame ? "
Then said he, " Fair love, Perseus is my name,
Not known of men, though that may come to be ;
And her that bore me men call Danaë,
And tales of my begetting people tell
And call my father Jove : but it befell
Unto my mother, when I first was born,
That she, cast out upon the sea, forlorn
Of help of men, unto Seriphos came ;
And there she dwells as now, not gathering shame,
But called a Queen ; and thence I come indeed,
Sent by the gods to help thee in thy need."
Then he began and told her everything
Down to the slaying of the monstrous king,
She listened to him meanwhile, glad at heart
That he had played so fair and great a part.
But all being told, she said, " This salt pool nigh

Left by the tide, now mirrors well the sky,
So smooth it is, and now I stand anear
Canst thou not see my foolish visage clear,
Yea, e'en the little gems upon my hands ?
May I not see this marvel of the lands
So mirrored, and yet live—make no delay,
The sea is pouring fast into the bay,
And we must soon be gone."
" Look down," he said,
" And take good heed thou turnest not thine head."
Then gazing down, with shuddering dread and awe,
Over her imaged shoulder, soon she saw
The head rise up, so beautiful and dread,
That, white and ghastly, yet seemed scarcely dead
Beside the image of her own fair face,
As, daring not to move from off the place,
But, trembling sore, she cried, " Enough, O love !
What man shall doubt thou art the son of Jove ;
I think thou wilt not die : " then with her hand
She hid her eyes, and trembling did she stand
Until she felt his lips upon her cheek ;
Then turning round, with anxious eyes and meek,
She gazed upon him, and some doubtful thought
Up to her brow the tender colour brought,
And sinking somewhat down her golden head,
Stammering a little now these words she said,—
" O godlike man, thou dost not ask my name,
Or why folk gave me up to death and shame ;
Dost thou not dread I am some sorceress,
Whose evil deeds well earned me that distress ? "
" Tell me thy name," he said ; " yet as for thee
I deem that thou wert bound beside the sea,
Because the gods would have the dearest thing
Thy land possessed for its own ransoming."
She said, " O love, the sea is rising fast,
And time it is that we henceforth were past ;
The only path that leadeth to the down
Is far, and thence a good way is the town ;

Come then, and on our journey will I tell
How all these things, now come to nought, befell."
" Lead me," he said, and lifted from the sand
The monster's head ; and therewith, hand in hand,
Together underneath the cliffs they went,
The while she told her tale to this intent.

" This is the Syrian land, this town anigh
Is Joppa, and Andromeda am I,
Daughter of him who holds the sceptre there,
King Cepheus and Cassiope the fair.
" She, smit by cruel madness, brought ill fate
Upon the land to make it desolate ;
For by the place whence thou deliveredst me,
An altar to the daughters of the sea
Erewhile there stood, and we in solemn wise,
Unto the maids were wont to sacrifice,
And give them gifts of honey, oil, and wine,
That we might have the love of folk divine ;
And so it chanced that on a certain day,
When from that place the sea was ebbed away,
Upon the firm sands I and many a maid
About that altar went, while the flutes played
Such notes as sea-folk love ; and as we went
Upon the wind rich incense-clouds we sent
About the hallowed stone, whereon there lay
Fruits of the earth for them to bear away ;
Thus did we maids, as we were wont to do,
And watching us, as was their wont also,
Our mothers stood, my own amidst the rest.
" But ere the rites were done, as one possessed
She cried aloud, ' Alas, what do we now,
Such honour unto unseen folk to show !
To spend our goods, our labour, and our lives,
In serving these the careless sea-wind drives
Hither and thither through the booming seas ;
While thou Andromeda art queen of these,

And in thy limbs such lovely godhead moves,
That thou shalt be new Mother of the Loves ;
Thou shalt not die ! Go, child, and sit alone,
And take our homage on thy golden throne ;
And I that bore thee will but be thy slave,
Nor shall another any worship have.'

" Trembling awhile we stood with heads downcast,
To hear those words, then from the beach we passed ;
And sick at heart each went unto her home
Expecting when the fearful death should come,
Like those of Thebes, who, smit by arrows, fell
Before the feet of her who loved too well.

" And yet stayed not my mother's madness there ;
She caused men make a silver image fair
Of me unhappy, round the base she writ
' *Fairest of all*,' and bade men carry it,
With flowers and music, down unto the sea,
Who on the altar fixed it solidly
Against the beating of the winds and waves.

" But we, expecting now no quiet graves,
Trembled at every murmur of the night,
And if a cloud should hide the noon sun bright
Grew faint with terror ; yet the days went by
Harmless above our great iniquity,
Until one wretched morn I woke to hear,
Down in the street loud wails and cries of fear,
And my heart died within me, nor durst I
Ask for the reason of that bitter cry,
Though soon I knew it—nigh unto the sea
Were gathered folk for some festivity ;
When, at the happiest moment of their feast,
Forth from the deep there came a fearful beast
No man could name, who quickly snatched away
Their fairest maid, and with small pain did slay
Such men as there in arms before him stood ;
For unto him was steel as rotten wood,
And darts as straw—nor grew the story old,
Day after day e'en such a tale was told.

—Kiss me, my love ! I grow afraid again ;
Kiss me amid the memory of my pain.
Draw me to thee that I thine arms may feel,
A better help than triple brass or steel !
" Alas, love ! folk began to look on me
With angry eyes, and mutter gloomily,
As pale and trembling through the streets I passed ;
And from the heavy thunder-cloud, at last
The dreadful lightning quivered through the air :
For on a day the people filled the square
With arms and tumult, and my name I heard,
But heard no more ; for, shuddering and afeard,
Unto my far-off quiet bower I fled,
And from that moment deemed myself but dead.
How the time passed I know not, what they did
I know not now ; for like a quail half hid,
When the hawk's pinions shade the sun from him,
Crouching adown, I felt my life wax dim.
" The gods have made us mighty certainly
That we can bear such things and yet not die.
This morn—Ah, love, and was it yet this year,
Wherein thou camest to me, kind and dear ?—
This morn they brought me forth, they did on me
This mocking raiment bright with bravery ;
They mocked my head with gold, with gems my feet,
My heart with lovely songs and music sweet.
Thou wouldst have wept to see me led along
Amidst that dreary pomp with flowers and song,
But if folk wept, how could I note it then ;
Most vain to me were grown all ways of men.
" They brought me to mine image on the sands,
They took it down, they bore it in their hands
To deck mine empty tomb, I think, and then—
O cruel is the fearfulness of men,
Striving a little while to 'scape death's pain !—
My naked body they spared not to chain,
Lest I should 'scape the death from which they fled,
Then left me there alone and shamed—and dead—

While to his home each went again, to live
Such vain forgetful life as fate might give.
" O love, to think that love can pass away,
That, soon or late, to us shall come a day
When this shall be forgotten ! e'en this kiss
That makes us now forget the high God's bliss,
And sons of men with all their miseries."
" Turn round," he said, " and let your well-loved eyes
Behold the sea from this high grassy hill,
And thou shalt see the risen waves now fill
The bay from horn to horn of it : no more
Thy footprints bless the shell-strewn sandy shore,
The vale the monster scooped as 'neath my sword
He writhed, the black stream that from out him poured,
The rock we sat on, and the pool wherein
Thou sawest the gods' revenge for heedless sin—
How the green ripples of the shallow sea
Cover the strife and passion peacefully,
Nor lack the hallowing of the low broad sun.
" So has love stolen upon us, lovely one,
And quenched our old lives in this new delight,
And if thou needs must think of that dull night
That creepeth on no otherwise than this,
Yet for that thought hold closer to thy bliss,
Come nigher, come ! forget the more thy pain."

So there of all love's feasting were they fain,
Words fail to tell the joyance that they had,
And with what words they made each other glad.

THE GORGON'S HEAD

So, as it drew to ending of the day,
Unto the city did they take their way,
And when they stood before its walls at last
They found the heavy gate thereof shut fast,
And no one on the walls for very shame ;
Then to the wicket straightway Perseus came,
And down the monster's grinning head he threw,
While on the horn a mighty blast he blew,
But no one answered ; then he cried aloud,
" Come forth, O warders, and no more shrink cowed
Behind your battlements ! one man alone
Has dared to do what thousands have not done,
And the great beast beside the sea lies dead :
Come forth, come forth ! and gaze upon this head ! "
Then opened was the door a little way,
And one peered forth and saw him with the may,
And turning round some joyous words he cried
Unto the rest, who oped the great gates wide,
And through them Perseus the saved maiden led.
Then as the folk cast eyes upon the head,
They stopped their shouts to gaze thereon with fear,
And timidly the women drew anear ;
But soon, beholding Perseus' godlike grace,
His mighty limbs, and flushed and happy face,
Cried out unto the maid, " O happy thou,
Who are well paid for every trouble now,
In winning such a godlike man as this."
And many there were fain his skirts to kiss

But he smiled down on them, and said, " Rejoice,
O girls, indeed, but yet lift heart and voice
Unto the gods to-day, and not to me !
For they it was who sent me to this sea.
And first of all fail not to bless the Maid
Through whom it came that I was not afraid."
So through the streets they went, and quickly spread
News that the terror of the land was dead.
And folk thronged round to see the twain go by,
Or went before with flowers and minstrelsy,
Rejoicing for the slaying of their shame.

Thus harbingered the happy lovers came
Unto King Cepheus' royal house of gold,
To whom by this the joyful cries had told
That all was changed and still his days were good,
So, eager in his well-built porch he stood,
No longer now in mournful raiment clad.
But when they met, then were those two more glad
Than words can say ; there came her mother, too,
And round about her neck fair arms she threw,
Weeping for joy ; and all about the King
The great men stood and eyed the fearful thing
That lay at Perseus' feet : then the King said,
" O thou, who on this day hast saved my maid,
Wilt thou rule half my kingdom from to-day
Or wilt thou carry half my wealth away ?
Or in some temple shall we honour thee,
Setting thine image up beside the sea ?
Ask what thou wilt before these mighty lords,
And straightway is it thine without more words."
Then in his heart laughed Perseus : and, " O King,"
He said, " I ask indeed a mighty thing ;
Yet neither will I take thy wealth away,
Or make thee less a King than on this day,
And in no temple shall mine image stand
To look upon the sea that beats this land,

For fear the God who now is friend to me
Thereby should come to be mine enemy ;
And yet on this day am I grown so bold,
I ask a greater gift than power or gold ;
Give me thy maiden saved, to be my bride,
And let me go, because the world is wide,
And the gods hate me not, and I am fain
Some fertile land with these my hands to gain.
Nor think thereby that thou wilt get thee shame,
For if thou askest of my race and name,
Perseus I am, the son of Danaë,
Born nigh to Argos, by the sounding sea,
And those that know, call me the son of Jove,
Who in past days my mother's face did love."
Then, glad at heart, the king said, " Poor indeed
Were such a gift, to give thee to thy meed
This that thine own unconquered hands have won.
O ye ! bring now the head and cast thereon
Jewels and gold from out my treasury,
Till nothing of its grimness men can see ;
And let folk bring round to the harbour's mouth
My ship that saileth yearly to the south ;
That to his own land since it is his will
This Prince may go ; nor yet without his fill
Of that which all men long for everywhere,
Honour, and gold, and women kind and fair.
And ye, O lords, to-morrow ere midday,
Come hither to my house in great array,
For then this marriage will we solemnize,
Appeasing all the gods with gifts of price."
Then loud all shouted, and the end of day
Being come, Andromeda was led away
Unto her bower, and there within a while
She fell asleep, and in her sleep did smile,
For on the calm of that forgetfulness
Her bliss some happy longings did impress.
But in the Syrian King's adorned hall
Sat Perseus till the shadows 'gan to fall

Shorter beneath the moon, and still he thought
Amid the feast of what a day had brought
Unto his heart, a foolish void before,
And for the morrow must he long so sore
That all those joyances and minstrelsy
Seemed unto him but empty things to be.

Early next morn the city was astir,
And country folk came in from far and near
Hearing the joyous tidings that the beast
Was dead, and fain to see the marriage feast,
And joyous folk wandered from street to street
Crowned with fair flowers and singing carols sweet.
Then to the maiden's chamber maidens came,
And woke her up to love and joyous shame,
And as the merry sun streamed through the room
Spread out unequalled marvels of the loom,
Stored up for such an end in days long done,
Ere yet her grey eyes looked upon the sun,
Fine webs like woven mist, wrought in the dawn,
Long ere the dew had left the sunniest lawn,
Gold cloth so wrought that nought of gold seemed there,
But rather sunlight over blossoms fair ;
You would have said that gods had made them, bright,
To hide her body from the common light
Lest men should die from unfulfilled desire.
Gems too they showed wrought by the hidden fire
That eats the world, and from the unquiet sea
Pearls worth the ransom of an argosy.
Yet all too little all these riches seemed
In worship of her, who as one who dreamed,
By her fair maidens' hands was there arrayed,
Then, with loose hair, ungirded as a maid
Unto the threshold of the house was brought,
But when her hand familiar fingers caught,
And when that voice, that erst amidst her fear
She deemed a god's, now smote upon her ear

Like one new-born to heaven she seemed to be.
But dreamlike was the long solemnity,
Unreal the joyous streets, where yesterday
She passed half dead upon her wretched way ;
And though before the flickering altar flame
She trembled when she thought of that past shame,
And midst the shouting knit her brows to think
Of what a cup these men had bidden her drink,
Unreal they seemed, forgotten as a tale
We cannot tell, though it may still avail
For pensive thoughts betwixt the day and night.
All things unto the gods were done aright ;
Beside the sea the flame and smoke uprose
Over rich gifts of many things to those
A woman's tongue had wounded ; golden veils
And images, and bowls wrought o'er with tales,
By all the altars of the gods were laid ;
On this last day of maidenhood the maid
Had stood before the shrines, and there had thrown
Sweet incense on the flame, and through the town
The praises of immortals had been sung,
And sacred flowers about the houses hung ;
And now the last hours of the dreamlike day
Amid great feasting slowly passed away.

But in that land there was a mighty lord,
To whom erewhile the King had pledged his word
That he should wed Andromeda, and he
Heard through sure friends of this festivity
And raged thereat, and thought that eve to come
Unbidden to the feast and bear her home ;
Phineus his name was, great amidst great men.
He setting out, came to the great hall when
The sun well-nigh down, all armed was he,
And at his back came on tumultuously
His armed men-slaves, and folk that loved him dear.
Beholding him, the King rose up in fear,
And all about the place scared folk uprose

As men surprised at feast by deadly foes ;
But Perseus laughing said, " What feat do ye
This eve in honour of my sweet and me ?
Or are ye but the servants of the King
Returned from doing for him some great thing
In a far land ? then sit here and be glad,
For on this day the King feeds good and bad."
Then inarticulate with rage and grief
Phineus turned on him, snatching at a sheaf
Of darts that hung against a pillar there,
And hurled one at him, that sung through his hair
And smote a serving man down by his side ;
Then finding voice, he faced the King and cried,
" What dost thou drinking with this robber here,
Who comes to steal that which I hold so dear
That on my knees I prayed for her to thee ?
Speak, Cepheus ! wilt thou give her yet to me
And have good peace withal, or wilt thou die ?
Ho, friends, and ye that follow, cry my cry ! "

Then straight the hall rang with a mighty shout
Of " Phineus," and from sheath and belt leapt out
The gleaming steel, and Cepheus stammering
Took heart to say, " Think well upon this thing ;
What should I do ? the man did save her life,
And her he might have made his slave, as wife
He asks for now ; take gifts and go thy way
Nor quench in blood the joyance of this day."
Then forth stood Perseus with a frowning face
Before them all, and cried out from his place,
" Get ye behind my back, all friends to me ?
And ere the lamps are lighted ye shall see
A stranger thing than ye have ever dreamed ; "
And as he spake in his left hand there gleamed
The gold-wrought satchel ; but amazed and cowed
Did the King's friends behind the hero crowd,
Who, ere from out the bag he drew the head,
Unto that band of fierce new-comers said ;

" Will ye have life or death ? if life, then go
And on the grass outside your armour throw,
And then returning, drink to my delight
Until the summer sun puts out the night."
But loud they shouted, swaying to and fro,
And mocked at him, and cried aloud to know
If in his hand Jove's thunderbolt he had,
Or Mars' red sword that makes the eagles glad ;
But Phineus, raging, cried, " Take him alive,
That we for many an hour the wretch may drive
With thongs and clubs until he longs to die ! "
Then all set on him with a mighty cry,
But, with a shout that thrilled high over theirs,
He drew the head out by the snaky hairs
And turned on them the baleful glassy eyes ;
Then sank to silence all that storm of cries
And clashing arms ; the tossing points that shone
In the last sunbeams, went out one by one
As the sun left them, for each man there died,
E'en as the shepherd on the bare hill-side,
Smitten amid the grinding of the storm ;
When, while the hare lies flat in her wet form,
E'en strong men quake for fear in houses strong,
And nigh the ground the lightning runs along.
But upright on their feet the dead men stood,
In brow and cheek still flushed the angry blood ;
This smiled, the mouth of that was open wide,
This other drew the great sword from his side,
All were at point to do this thing or that.

As silent in the hall the living sat
As those dead men, till Perseus turned at last
And over all a kingly look he cast,
And said, " O friends, drink yet one cup to me,
And then to-morrow will I try the sea
With this my love ; and, sweet Andromeda,
Forgive me that I needs must play this play ;
Forget it, sweet ! thou wilt not see again

This land of thine, upland, or hill, or plain ;
There where we go shall all be new to thee
Except the love that thou hast won from me."
Then to her frightened face there came a smile,
And in her cheeks within a little while
Sweet colour came again ; but right few words
Upon that night were said of king or lords.

But soon again the lovers were alone
Of all the sons of men remembering none,
Forgetting every god but him whose bow
About the vexed and flowery earth doth go.

THE SAILING OF THE "ARGO"

(From "The Life and Death of Jason," by William Morris)

But through the town few eyes were sealed by sleep
When the sun rose ; yea, and the upland sheep
Must guard themselves for that one morn at least
Against the wolf ; and wary doves may feast
Unscared that morning on the ripening corn,
Nor did the whetstone touch the scythe that morn ;
And all unheeded did the mackerel shoal
Make green the blue waves, or the porpoise roll
Through changing hills and valleys of the sea.
For 'twixt the thronging people solemnly
The heroes went afoot along the way
That led unto the haven of the bay,
And as they went the roses rained on them
From windows glorious with the well-wrought hem
Of many a purple cloth ; and all their spears
Were twined with flowers that the fair earth bears ;
And round their ladies' tokens were there set
About their helmets, flowery wreaths, still wet
With beaded dew of the scarce vanished night.
So as they passed, the young men at the sight
Shouted for joy, and their hearts swelled with pride ;
But scarce the elders could behold dry-eyed
The glorious show, remembering well the days
When they were able too to win them praise,
And in their hearts was hope of days to come.
Nor could the heroes leave their fathers' home
Unwept of damsels, who henceforth must hold
The empty air unto their bosoms cold,

And make their sweet complainings to the night
That heedeth not soft eyes and bosoms white.
And many such an one was there that morn,
Who, with lips parted and grey eyes forlorn,
Stood by the window and forgot to cast
Her gathered flowers as the heroes passed,
But held them still within her garment's hem,
Though many a wingèd wish she sent to them.
But on they went, and as the way they trod,
His swelling heart nigh made each man a god ;
While clashed their armour to the minstrelsy
That went before them to the doubtful sea.
And now, the streets being passed, they reached the bay,
Where by the well-built quay long Argo lay,
Glorious with gold, and shining in the sun.
Then first they shouted, and each man begun
Against his shield to strike his brazen spear ;
And as along the quays they drew a-near,
Faster they strode and faster, till a cry
Again burst from them, and right eagerly
Into swift running did they break at last,
Till all the wind-swept quay being overpast,
They pressed across the gangway, and filled up
The hollow ship as wine a golden cup.

But Jason, standing by the helmsman's side
High on the poop, lift up his voice and cried :—
" Look landward, heroes, once, before ye slip
The tough well-twisted hawser from the ship,
And set your eager hands to rope or oar ;
For now, behold, the king stands on the shore
Beside a new-built altar, while the priests
Lead up a hecatomb of spotless beasts,
White bulls, and coal-black horses, and my sire
Lifts up the barley-cake above the fire ;
And in his hand a cup of ruddy gold
King Pelias takes ; and now may ye behold

The broad new-risen sun light up the God,
Who, holding in his hand the crystal rod
That rules the sea, stands by Dædalian art
Above his temple, set right far apart
From other houses, nigh the deep green sea.
"And now, O fellows, from no man but me
These gifts come to the God, that, ere long years,
Have drowned our laughter and dried up our tears,
We may behold that glimmering brazen God
Against the sun bear up his crystal rod
Once more, and once more cast upon this land
This cable, severed by my bloodless brand."

So spake he, and raised up the glittering steel,
That fell, and seaward straight did Argo reel,
Set free, and smitten by the western breeze,
And raised herself against the ridgy seas,
With golden eyes turned toward the Colchian land,
Still heedful of wise Tiphys' skilful hand.
But silent sat the heroes by the oar,
Hearkening the sounds borne from the lessening shore;
The lowing of the doomed and flower-crowned beasts,
The plaintive singing of the ancient priests,
Mingled with blare of trumpets, and the sound
Of all the many folk that stood around
The altar and the temple by the sea.
So sat they pondering much and silently,
Till all the landward noises died away,
And, midmost now of the green sunny bay,
They heard no sound but washing of the sea;
And piping of the following western breeze,
And heavy measured beating of the oars;
So left the Argo the Thessalian shores.

Now Neptune, joyful of the sacrifice
Beside the sea, and all the gifts of price
That Jason gave him, sent them wind at will,

And swiftly Argo climbed each changing hill,
And ran through rippling valleys of the sea ;
Nor toiled the heroes unmelodiously,
For by the mast sat great Œager's son,
And through the harp-strings let his fingers run
Nigh soundless, and with closed lips for a while ;
But soon across his face there came a smile,
And his glad voice brake into such a song
That swiftlier sped the eager ship along.

" O bitter sea, tumultuous sea,
Full many an ill is wrought by thee !—
Unto the wasters of the land
Thou holdest out thy wrinkled hand ;
And when they leave the conquered town,
Whose black smoke makes thy surges brown,
Driven betwixt thee and the sun,
As the long day of blood is done,
From many a league of glittering waves
Thou smilest on them and their slaves.
" The thin bright-eyed Phœnician
Thou drawest to thy waters wan,
With ruddy eve and golden morn
Thou temptest him, until, forlorn,
Unburied, under alien skies
Cast up ashore his body lies.
" Yea, whoso sees thee from his door,
Must ever long for more and more ;
Nor will the beechen bowl suffice,
Or homespun robe of little price,
Or hood well woven of the fleece
Undyed, or unspiced wine of Greece ;
So sore his heart is set upon
Purple, and gold, and cinnamon ;
For as thou cravest, so he craves,
Until he rolls beneath thy waves.
Nor in some landlocked, unknown bay,
Can satiate thee for one day.

"Now, therefore, O thou bitter sea,
With no long words we pray to thee,
But ask thee, hast thou felt before
Such strokes of the long ashen oar?
And hast thou yet seen such a prow
Thy rich and niggard waters plough?
"Nor yet, O sea, shalt thou be cursed,
If at thy hands we gain the worst,
And, wrapt in water, roll about
Blind-eyed, unheeding song or shout,
Within thine eddies far from shore,
Warmed by no sunlight any more.
"Therefore, indeed, we joy in thee,
And praise thy greatness, and will we
Take at thy hands both good and ill,
Yea, what thou wilt, and praise thee still,
Enduring not to sit at home,
And wait until the last days come,
When we no more may care to hold
White bosoms under crowns of gold,
And our dulled hearts no longer are
Stirred by the clangorous noise of war,
And hope within our souls is dead,
And no joy is rememberèd.
"So, if thou hast a mind to slay,
Fair prize thou hast of us to-day;
And if thou hast a mind to save,
Great praise and honour shalt thou have;
But whatso thou wilt do with us,
Our end shall not be piteous,
Because our memories shall live
When folk forget the way to drive
The black keel through the heaped-up sea,
And half dried up thy waters be."

Then shouted all the heroes, and they drove
The good ship forth, so that the birds above,
With long white wings, scarce flew so fast as they.

JASON'S TASKS

So in the gallery did the king take seat
With fair Medea, and the Colchians stood
Hedging the twain in with a mighty wood
Of spears and axes, while the Minyæ
Stood off a space the fated things to see.
  Ugly and rugged was that spot of ground,
And with an iron wall was closed around,
And at the further end a monstrous cage
Of iron bars, shut in the stupid rage
Of those two beasts, and therefrom ever came
The flashing and the scent of sulphurous flame,
As with their brazen, clangorous bellowing
They hailed the coming of the Colchian king ;
Nor was there one of the seafaring men
But trembled, gazing on the deadly pen,
But Jason only, who before the rest
Shone like a star, having upon his breast
A golden corslet from the treasury
Of wise King Phineus by the doubtful sea,
By an Egyptian wrought who would not stay
At Salmydessa more than for a day,
But on that day the wondrous breast-plate wrought,
Which, with good will and strong help, Jason bought;
And from that treasury his golden shoe
Came, and his thighs the king's gift covered too ;
But on his head his father's helm was set
Wreathed round with bay leaves, and his sword lay yet

Within the scabbard, while his ungloved hand
Bore nought within it but an olive wand.
Now King Æetes well beholding him,
Fearless of mien and so unmatched of limb,
Trembled a little in his heart as now
He bade the horn-blowers the challenge blow,
But thought, " what strength can help him, or what art,
Or which of all the Gods be on his part ? "
Impious, who knew not through what doubtful days,
E'en from his birth, and perilous rough ways
Juno had brought him safely, nor indeed
Of his own daughter's quivering lips took heed,
And restless hands wherein the God so wrought,
The wise man seeing her had known her thought.
Now Jason, when he heard the challenge blow,
Across the evil fallow 'gan to go
With face beyond its wont in nowise pale,
Nor footstep faltering, if that might avail
The doomed man aught ; so to the cage he came,
Whose bars now glowed red hot with spouted flame,
In many a place ; nor doubted any one
Who there beheld him that his days were done,
Except his love alone, and even she,
Sickening with doubt and terror, scarce could see
The hero draw the brazen bolt aside
And throw the glowing wicket open wide.

But he alone, apart from his desire,
Stood unarmed, facing those two founts of fire,
Yet feared not aught, for hope and fear were dead
Within his heart, and utter hardihead
Had Juno set there ; but the awful beasts
Beholding now the best of all their feasts,
Roared in their joy and fury, till from sight
They and the prince were hidden by the white,
Thick rolling clouds of sulphurous pungent smoke,
Through which upon the blinded man they broke.

But when within a yard of him they came,
Baffled they stopped, still bellowing, and the flame
Still spouting out from nostril and from mouth,
As from some island mountain in the south
The trembling mariners behold it cast ;
But still to right and left of him it passed,
Breaking upon him as cool water might,
Nor harming more, except that from his sight
All corners of the cage were hidden now,
Nor knew he where to seek the brazen plough ;
As to and fro about the quivering cage
The monsters rushed in blind and helpless rage.
But as he doubted, to his eyes alone
Within the place a golden light outshone,
Scattering the clouds of smoke, and he beheld
Once more the Goddess who his head upheld
In rough Anaurus on that other tide ;
She, smiling on him, beckoned, and 'gan glide
With rosy feet across the fearful floor,
Breathing cool odours round her, till a door
She opened to him in the iron wall,
Through which he passed, and found a grisly stall
Of iron still, and at one end of it,
By glimmering lamps with greenish flame half lit,
Beheld the yoke and shining plough he sought ;
Which, seizing straight, by mighty strength he brought
Unto the door, nor found the Goddess there,
Who in the likeness of a damsel fair,
Colchian Metharma, through the spearmen passed,
Bearing them wine, and causeless terror cast
Into their foolish hearts, nor spared to go
And 'mid the close seafaring ranks to sow
Good hope of joyful ending, and then stood
Behind the maid unseen, and brought the blood
Back to her cheeks and trembling lips and wan,
With thoughts of things unknown to maid or man.
Meanwhile upon the foreheads of the twain

Had Jason cast the yoke with little pain,
And drove them now with shouts out through the door
Which in such guise ne'er had they passed before,
For never were they made the earth to till,
But rather, feeding fat, to work the will
Of some all-knowing man ; but now they went
Like any peasant's beasts, tamed by the scent
Of those new herbs Medea's hand had plucked,
Whose roots from evil earth strange power had sucked.

Now in the open field did Jason stand
And to the plough-stilts set his unused hand,
And down betwixt them lustily he bent ;
Then the bulls drew, and the bright ploughshare sent
The loathly fallow up on the right side,
Whilst o'er their bellowing shrilly Jason cried :—
" Draw nigh, O King, and thy new ploughman see,
Then mayst thou make me shepherd, too, to thee ;
Nor doubt thou, doing so, from out thy flock
To lose but one, who ne'er shall bring thee stock,
Or ram or ewe, nor doubt the grey wolf, King,
Wood-haunting bear, dragon, or such like thing.
Ah the straight furrow ! how it mindeth me
Of the smooth parting of the land-locked sea
Over against Eubœa, and this fire
Of the fair altar where my joyful sire
Will pour out wine to Neptune when I come
Not empty-handed back unto my home."

Such mocks he said ; but when the sunlight broke
Upon his armour through the sulphurous smoke,
And showed the lengthening furrow cutting through
The ugly farrow as anigh they drew,
The joyful Minyæ gave a mighty shout ;
But pale the king sat with brows knit for doubt,
Muttering : " Whose counsel hast thou taken, then,
To do this thing, which not the best of men
Could do unholpen of some sorcery ?

Whoso it is, wise were he now to die
Ere yet I know him, since for many a day
Vainly for death I hope to hear him pray."
Meanwhile, askance Medea eyed the king,
Thinking nought safe until that everything
Was finished in the Colchian land, and she
No more beheld its shores across the sea ;
But he, beholding her pale visage, thought
Grief like to his such paleness on her brought,
And turning to her, said : " How pale thou art !
Let not this first foil go unto thine heart
Too deeply, since thou knowest certainly,
One way or other, this vain fool must die."
" Father," she said, " a doubt is on me still,
Some God this is come here our wealth to spill ;
Nor is this first thing easier than the rest."
Then stammering, she said : " Were it not best
To give him that which he must have at last,
Before he slays us ? " But Æetes cast
A sharp glance at her, and a pang shot through
His weary heart as half the truth he knew.
But for one moment, and he made reply
In passionate words : " Then, daughter, let me die !
And, ere I die, behold thee led along
A wretched slave to suffer grief and wrong
In far-off lands, and Æa at thy back
Nought but a huge flame hiding woe and wrack,
Before from out my willing open hand
This wonder, and the safeguard of my land
A God shall take ; and such this man is not.
What ! dost thou think because his eyes are hot
On tender maidens he must be a God ?
Or that because firmly this field he trod
Well-fenced with magic ? Were he like to me,
Grey-haired and lean, what Godhead wouldst thou see
In such an one ? Hold, then, thy peace of this,
And thou shalt see thy God full widely miss
The mark he aims at, when from out the earth

Spring up those brothers of an evil birth."
And therewithal he gazed at her, and thought
To see the rosy flush by such words brought
Across her face ; as in the autumn eve,
Just as the sun's last half begins to leave
The shivering world, both east and west are red.—
But calm and pale she turned about her head,
And said : " My father, neither were these words
My words, nor would I struggle with my lords ;
Thou art full wise ; whatso thine heart would have
That do, and heed me not, who fain would save
This glory of thy kingdom and of thee.
But now look up, and soothly thou shalt see
Mars' acre tilled : the field is ready then,
Bid them bring forth the seed that beareth men."
Again with her last words the shouts out-broke
From the seafarers, for, beside the yoke,
Before Mars' altar did Prince Jason stand,
Holding the wand of olive in his hand,
And on the new-turned furrow shone the sun
Behind him, and his half-day's work was done.
And now another marvel : for, behold,
As at the furrow's end he slacked his hold
Upon the plough-stilts, all the bellowing
Wherewith the beasts had made the grim close ring,
Fell suddenly, and all the fire died
That they were wont erewhile to scatter wide
From mouth and nostril, and their loins and knees
Stiffened, and they grew nought but images
Lifelike but lifeless, wonderful but dead,
Such as he makes, who many a day hath fed
His furnace with the beechwood, when the clay
Has grown beneath his deft hands day by day
And all is ready for the casting, then
Such things as these he makes for royal men.
But 'mid the shouts turned Jason to the king,
And said : " Fair sir, behold a wondrous thing,
And since these beasts have been content to stay

Before Mars' altar, from this very day
His should they be if they were mine to give."
" O Jason," said the king, " well mayst thou live
For many a day, since thou this deed hast done,
But for the Gods, not unto any one
Will I give gifts ; but let them take from me
What once they gave, if so the thing must be.
But do thou take this sack from out my hand
And cast its seed about the new-tilled land,
And watch the issue ; and keep words till then,
I counsel thee, O luckiest of men."

Then Jason took the sack, and with it went
About that field new turned, and broadcast sent
The white teeth scattering, but or ere he came
Back to the altar, and the flickering flame,
He heard from 'neath the earth a muttered sound
That grew and grew, till all that piece of ground
Swelled into little hillocks, like as where
A stricken field was foughten, but that there
Quiet the heroes' bones lie underneath
The quivering grasses and the dusky heath ;
But now these heaps the labouring earth upthrew
About Mars' acre, ever greater grew,
And still increased the noise, till none could hear
His fellow speak, and paleness and great fear
Fell upon all ; and Jason only stood
As stands the stout oak in the poplar wood
When winds are blowing.
Then he saw the mounds
Bursten asunder, and the muttered sounds
Changed into loud strange shouts and warlike clang,
As with freed feet at last the earth-born sprang
On to the tumbling earth, and the sunlight
Shone on bright arms clean ready for the fight.
But terribly they showed, for through the place
Not one there was but had his staring face,
With great wide eyes, and lips in a set smile,

Turned full on Jason, who, for a short while,
Forgot indeed Medea's warning word,
And from its golden sheath half drew his sword,
But then, remembering all, cried valiantly :
" New born ye are—new slain too shall ye be,
Take this, and round about it read your doom,
And bid them make new dwellings in the tomb,
Wherefrom ye came, nor ever should have passed."
Therewith the ball among the host he cast,
Standing to watch what next that folk would do.
But he the ball had smitten turned unto
The one who stood by him and like a cup
Shattered his head ; then the next lifted up
His axe and slew the slayer, and straightway
Among the rest began a deadly fray.
No man gave back a foot, no breathing space
One took or gave within that dreadful place,
But where the vanquished stood there was he slain,
And straight the conquering arm was raised again
To meet its match and in its turn to fall.
No tide was there of fainting and recall,
No quivering pennon o'er their heads to flit,
Nor name or eager shout called over it,
No groan of pain, and no despairing cry
From him who knows his time has come to die,
But passionless each bore him in that fight,
Scarce otherwise than as a smith might smite
On sounding iron or bright glittering brass.
So, little by little, did the clamour pass
As one by one each fell down in his place,
Until at last, midmost the bloody space,
One man was left, alive but wounded sore,
Who, staring round about and seeing no more
His brothers' spears against him, fixed his eyes
Upon the queller of those mysteries.
Then dreadfully they gleamed, and with no word,
He tottered towards him with uplifted sword.
But scarce he made three paces down the field,

Ere chill death reached his heart, and on his shield
Clattering he fell. So satiate of fight
Quickly the earth-born were, and their delight
With what it fed on perished, and one hour
Ripened the deadly fruit of that fell flower.

THE TAKING OF THE FLEECE

But when they reached the precinct of the God
And on the hallowed turf their feet now trod,
Medea turned to Jason, and she said :—
" O love, turn round, and note the goodlihead
My father's palace shows beneath the stars.
Bethink thee of the men grown old in wars,
Who do my bidding ; what delights I have,
How many ladies lie in wait to save
My life from toil and carefulness, and think
How sweet a cup I have been used to drink,
And how I cast it to the ground for thee.
Upon the day thou weariest of me,
I wish that thou mayst somewhat think of this,
And 'twixt thy new-found kisses, and the bliss
Of something sweeter than thine old delight,
Remember thee a little of this night
Of marvels, and this starlit, silent place,
And these two lovers standing face to face."
" O love," he said, " by what thing shall I swear,
That while I live thou shalt not be less dear
Than thou art now ? "
" Nay, sweet," she said, " let be ;
Wert thou more fickle than the restless sea,
Still should I love thee, knowing thee for such ;
Whom I know not, indeed, but fear the touch
Of Fortune's hand when she beholds our bliss,
And knows that nought is good to me but this.

" But now be ready, for I long full sore
To hear the merry dashing of the oar,
And feel the freshness of the following breeze
That sets me free, and sniff the rough salt seas.
Look ! yonder thou mayst see armed shadows steal
Down to the quays, the guiders of thy keel ;
Now follow me, though little shalt thou do
To gain this thing, if Hecate be true
Unto her servant. Nay, draw not thy sword,
And, for thy life, speak not a single word
Until I bid thee, else may all be lost,
And of this game our lives yet pay the cost."

Then toward the brazen temple-door she went,
Wherefrom, half-open, a faint gleam was sent ;
For little need of lock it had forsooth,
Because its sleepless guardian knew no ruth,
And had no lust for precious things or gold,
Whom, drawing near, Jason could now behold,
As back Medea thrust the heavy door,
For prone he lay upon the gleaming floor,
Not moving, though his restless, glittering eyes
Gave unto them no least hope of surprise.
Hideous he was, where all things else were fair ;
Dull-skinned, foul-spotted, with lank rusty hair
About his neck ; and hooked yellow claws
Just showed from 'neath his belly and huge jaws,
Closed in the hideous semblance of a smile.
Then Jason shuddered, wondering with what wile
That fair king's daughter such a beast could tame,
And of his sheathed sword had but little shame.

But being within the doors, both mantle grey
And heavy gown Medea cast away,
And in thin clinging silk alone was clad,
And round her neck a golden chain she had,
Whereto was hung a harp of silver white.
Then the great dragon, at that glittering sight,
Raised himself up upon his loathly feet,
As if to meet her, while her fingers sweet

Already moved amongst the golden strings,
Preluding nameless and delicious things ;
But now she beckoned Jason to her side,
For slowly towards them 'gan the beast to glide,
And when close to his love the hero came,
She whispered breathlessly : " On me the blame
If here we perish ; if I give the word,
Then know that all is lost, and draw thy sword,
And manlike die in battle with the beast ;
So dying shalt thou fail to see at least
This body thou desiredst so to see,
In thy despite here mangled wretchedly.
Peace, for he cometh, O thou Goddess bright,
What help wilt thou be unto me this night ? "
So murmured she, while ceaselessly she drew
Her fingers through the strings, and fuller grew
The tinkling music, but the beast drawn nigh
Went slower still, and turning presently
Began to move around them in a ring.
And as he went, there fell a strange rattling
Of his dry scales ; but as he turned, she turned,
Nor failed to meet the eyes that on her burned
With steadfast eyes, and, lastly, clear and strong
Her voice broke forth in sweet melodious song :—

" O evil thing, what brought thee here
To be a wonder and a fear
Unto the river-haunting folk ?
Was it the God of Day that broke
The shadow of thy windless trees,
Gleaming from golden palaces,
And shod with light, and armed with light,
Made thy slime stone, and day thy night,
And drove thee forth unwillingly
Within his golden house to lie ?
" Or was it the slim messenger,
Who, treading softly, free from fear,
Beguiled thee with his smiling face

From out thy dim abiding place,
To follow him and set thee down
Midst of this twice-washed royal town ?
" Or, was it rather the dread Lord
Who slayeth without spear or sword,
And with the flower-culling maid
Of Enna, dwelleth in the shade,
Who, with stern voice compelling thee,
Hath set thee here, our bane to be ?
" Or was it Venus, seeking far
A sleepless guard 'gainst grief and war,
Who, journeying through thy dismal land,
Beside the heavy lake did stand,
And with no word, but very sight
Of tender limbs and bosom white,
Drew forth thy scaly feet and hard,
To follow over rock and shard ?
" Or rather, thy dull, waveless lake
Didst thou not leave for her dread sake,
Who, passing swift from glade to glade,
The forest-dwellers makes afraid
With shimmering of her silver bow
And dreadful arrows ? Even so
I bid thee now to yield to me,
Her maid, who overmastered thee,
The three-formed dreadful one who reigns
In heaven and the fiery plains,
But on the green earth best of all.
" Lo, now thine upraised crest let fall,
Relax thy limbs, let both thine eyes
Be closed, and bestial fantasies
Fill thy dull head till dawn of day
And we are far upon our way."

As thus she sung the beast seemed not to hear
Her words at first, but ever drew anear,
Circling about them, and Medea's face
Grew pale unto the lips, though still the place

Rung with the piercing sweetness of her song ;
But slower soon he dragged his length along,
And on his limbs he tottered, till at last
All feebly by the wondering prince he passed,
And whining to Medea's feet he crept,
With eyes half closed, as though well-nigh he slept,
And there before her laid his head adown ;
Who, shuddering, on his wrinkled neck and brown
Set her white foot, and whispered : " Haste, O love !
Behold the keys ; haste ! while the Gods above
Are friendly to us ; there behold the shrine
Where thou canst see the lamp of silver shine.
Nay, draw not death upon both thee and me
With fearless kisses ; fear, until the sea
Shall fold green arms about us lovingly,
And kindly Venus to thy keel be nigh."
Then lightly from her soft side Jason stept,
While still upon the beast her foot she kept,
Still murmuring softly many an unknown word,
As when through half-shut casements the brown bird
We hearken when the night is come in June,
And thick-leaved woods are 'twixt us and his tune.

But Jason, going swiftly with good heart,
Came to the wished-for shrine built all apart
Midmost the temple, that on pillars stood
Of jasper green, and marble red as blood,
All white itself and carven cunningly
With Neptune bringing from the wavy sea
The golden shining ram to Athamas ;
And the first door thereof of silver was,
Wrought over with a golden glittering sun
That seemed well-nigh alike the heavenly one,
Such art therein the cunningest of men
Had used, which little Jason heeded then,
But thrusting in the lock the smallest key
Of those he bore, it opened easily ;
And then five others, neither wrought of gold,

Or carved with tales, or lovely to behold,
He opened ; but before the last one stayed
His hand, wherein the heavy key he weighed,
And pondering, in low muttered words he said :—
" The prize is reached, which yet I somewhat dread
To draw unto me ; since I know indeed,
That henceforth war and toil shall be my meed.—
Too late to fear, it was too late, the hour
I left the grey cliffs and the beechen bower,
So here I take hard life and deathless praise,
Who once desirèd nought but quiet days,
And painless life, not empty of delight ;
I, who shall now be quickener of the fight,
Named by a great name—a far-babbled name,
The ceaseless seeker after praise and fame.
" May all be well, and on the noisy ways
Still may I find some wealth of happy days."
Therewith he threw the last door open wide,
Whose hammered iron did the marvel hide,
And shut his dazzled eyes, and stretched his hands
Out toward the sea-born wonder of all lands,
And buried them deep in the locks of gold,
Grasping the Fleece within his mighty hold.

Which when Medea saw, her gown of grey
She caught up from the ground, and drew away
Her wearied foot from off the rugged beast,
And while from her soft strain she never ceased,
In the dull folds she hid her silk from sight,
And then, as bending 'neath the burden bright,
Jason drew nigh, joyful, yet still afraid,
She met him, and her wide grey mantle laid
Over the fleece, whispering : " Make no delay ;
He sleeps, who never slept by night or day
Till now ; nor will his charmèd sleep be long.
Light-foot am I, and sure thine arms are strong ;
Haste, then ! No word ! nor turn about to gaze

At me, as he who in the shadowy ways
Turned round to see once more the twice-lost face."

Then swiftly did they leave the dreadful place,
Turning no look behind, and reached the street,
That with familiar look and kind did greet
Those wanderers, mazed with marvels and with fear.
And so, unchallenged, did they draw anear
The long white quays, and at the street's end now
Beheld the ships' masts standing row by row
Stark black against the stars : then cautiously
Peered Jason forth, ere they took heart to try
The open starlit place ; but nought he saw
Except the night-wind twitching the loose straw
From half-unloaded keels, and nought he heard
But the strange twittering of a caged green bird
Within an Indian ship, and from the hill
A distant baying : yea, all was so still,
Somewhat they doubted, natheless forth they passed,
And Argo's painted sides they reached at last.
On whom down-looking, scarce more noise they heard
Than from the other ships ; some muttered word,
Some creaking of the timbers, as the tide
Ran gurgling seaward past her shielded side.
Then Jason knelt, and whispered : " Wise ye be,
O fair companions on the pathless sea,
But come, Erginus, Nestor, and ye twain
Of Lacedæmon, to behold my gain ;
Take me amongst you, neither be afraid
To take withal this gold, and this fair maid.
Yare !—for the ebb runs strongly towards the sea,
The east wind drives the rack to Thessaly,
And lightly do such kings as this one sleep
If now and then small watch their servants keep."

Then saw Medea men like shadows grey,
Rise from the darksome decks, who took straightway

With murmured joy, from Jason's outstretched hands,
The conquered Fleece, the wonder of all lands,
While with strong arms he took the royal maid,
And in their hold the precious burthen laid,
And scarce her dainty feet could touch the deck,
Ere down he leapt, and little now did reck
That loudly clanged his armour therewithal.
But, turning townward, did Medea call :—
" O noble Jason, and ye heroes strong,
To sea, to sea ! nor pray ye loiter long ;
For surely shall ye see the beacons flare
Ere in mid stream ye are, and running fair
On toward the sea with tide, and oar, and sail.
My father wakes, nor bides he to bewail
His loss and me ; I see his turret gleam
As he goes towards the beacon, and down stream
Absyrtus lurks before the sandy bar
In mighty keel well manned and dight for war."
But as she spoke, rattling the cable slipped
From out the hawse-hole, and the long oars dipped
As from the quays the heroes pushed away,
And in the loosened sail the wind 'gan play ;
But e'en as they unto the stroke leaned back,
And Nauplius, catching at the main-sheet slack,
Had drawn it taut, out flared the beacon wide,
Lighting the waves, and they heard folk who cried :
" Awake, awake, awake, O Colchian folk ! "
And all about the blare of horns outbroke,
As watch-tower answered watch-tower down the stream,
Where far below they saw the bale-fires gleam ;
And galloping horses now they heard,
And clang of arms, and cries of men afeared,
For now the merchant mariners who lay
About the town, thought surely an ill day
Had dawned upon them while they slept at ease,
And, half awake, pushed madly from the quays
With crash of breaking oars and meeting ships,

And cries and curses from outlandish lips ;
So fell the quiet night to turmoil sore,
While in the towers, over the uproar,
Melodiously the bells began to ring.

But Argo, leaping forward to the swing
Of measured oars, and leaning to the breeze,
Sped swiftly 'twixt the dark and whispering trees ;
Nor longer now the heroes silence kept,
So joyously their hearts within them leapt,
But loud they shouted, seeing the gold fell
Laid heaped before them, and longed sore to tell
Their fair adventure to the maids of Greece ;
And as the mingled noises did decrease
With added distance, and behind them night
Grew wan with coming of the eastern light,
Across the strings his fingers Orpheus drew,
And through the woods his wingèd music flew :—

" O surely, now the fisherman
Draws homeward through the water wan
Across the bay we know so well,
And in the sheltered chalky dell
The shepherd stirs ; and now afield
They drive the team with white wand peeled,
Muttering across the barley-bread
At daily toil and dreary-head.
" And 'midst them all, perchance, my love
Is waking, and doth gently move
And stretch her soft arms out to me,
Forgetting thousand leagues of sea ;
And now her body I behold,
Unhidden but by hair of gold,
And now the silver water kiss,
The crown of all delight and bliss.
And now I see her bind her hair
And do upon her raiment fair,

And now before the altar stand,
With incense in her outstretched hand,
To supplicate the Gods for me ;
Ah, one day landing from the sea,
Amid the maidens shall I hear
Her voice in praise, and see her near,
Holding the gold-wrapt laurel crown,
'Midst of the shouting, wondering town ! "

So sung he joyously, nor knew that they
Must wander yet for many an evil day
Or ever the dread Gods should let them come
Back to the white walls of their long-left home.
But on the shouting heroes gazed adown
The foundress of their triumph and renown,
And to her lover's side still drew anear,
With heart now swelled with joy, now sick with fear,
And cheeks now flushed with love, now pale and wan,
As now she thought upon that goodly man,
And now on the uncertain, dreadful Gods,
And now upon her father, and the odds
He might well raise against the reckless crew,
For all his mighty power well she knew ;
And at that thought well might her heart grow cold,
And well might she her wretched self behold,
Led helpless through some old familiar place,
With none to turn on her a pitying face,
Unto the death in life, she still might win ;
And yet, if she should 'scape the meed of sin
This once, the world was fair and bright enough,
And love there was to lead her o'er the rough
Of life, and love to crown her head with flowers,
And fill her days and nights with happy hours.

Now swift beneath the oar-strokes Argo flew,
While the sun rose behind them, and they drew
Unto the river's mouth, nor failed to see
Absyrtus' galley waiting watchfully

Betwixt them and the white-topped turbid bar.
Therefore they gat them ready now for war,
With joyful heart, for sharp they sniffed to sea,
And saw the great waves tumbling green and free
Outside the bar upon the way to Greece,
The rough green way to glory and sweet peace.
Then to the prow gat Jason, and the maid
Must needs be with him, though right sore afraid,
As nearing now the Colchian ship, they hung
On balanced oars ; but the wild Arcas strung
His deadly bow, and clomb into the top.
Then Jason cried : " Absyrtus, will ye stop
Our peaceful keel, or let us take the sea ?
Soothly, have we no will to fight with thee
If we may pass unfoughten, therefore say,
What is it thou wilt have this dawn of day ? "
Now on the other prow Absyrtus stood,
His visage red with eager wrathful blood,
And in his right hand shook a mighty spear,
And said : " O seafarers, ye pass not here,
For gifts or prayers, but if it must be so,
Over our sunken bulwarks shall ye go ;
Nor ask me why, for thus my father wills,
Yet, as I now behold you, my heart thrills
With wrath indeed ; and hearken for what cause,
That ye against all friendship and good laws
Bear off my sister with you ; wherefore now
Mars give you courage and a brazen brow !
That ye may try this dangerous pass in vain,
For soothly, of your slaughter am I fain."
Then Jason wrathfully threw up his head,
But ere the shout came, fair Medea said,
In trembling whisper thrilling through his ear :—
" Haste, quick upon them ! if before is fear,
Behind is death ! " Then Jason turning, saw
A tall ship staggering with the gusty flaw,
Just entering the long reach where they were,
And heard her horns through the fresh morning air.

Then lifted he his hand, and with a cry
Back flew the balanced oars full orderly.
And toward the doomed ship mighty Argo passed;
Thereon Absyrtus shouted loud, and cast
His spear at Jason, that before his feet
Stuck in the deck; then out the arrows fleet
Burst from the Colchians; and scarce did they spare
Medea's trembling side and bosom fair;
But Jason, roaring as the lioness
When round her helpless whelps the hunters press,
Whirled round his head his mighty brass-bound spear
That flying, smote the prince beneath the ear,
As Arcas' arrow sunk into his side.
Then falling, scarce he met the rushing tide,
Ere Argo's mighty prow had thrust apart
The huddled oars, and through the fair ship's heart
Had thrust her iron beak, then the green wave
Rushed in as rush the waters through a cave
That tunnels half a sea-girt lonely rock.
Then drawing swiftly backward from the shock,
And heeding not the cries of fear and woe,
They left the waters dealing with their foe;
And at the following ship threw back a shout,
And seaward o'er the bar drave Argo out.

Then joyful felt all men as now at last
From hill to green hill of the sea they passed;
But chiefly joyed Medea, as now grew
The Colchian hills behind them faint and blue,
And like a white speck showed the following ship.
There 'neath the canopy, lip pressed to lip,
They sat and told their love, till scarce he thought
What precious burden back to Greece he brought
Besides the maid, nor for his kingdom cared,
As on her beauty with wet eyes he stared,
And heard her sweet voice soft as in a dream,
When all seems gained, and trouble dead does seem,
And on his face her red lips he could feel,
And round her panting side his fingers steal.

So passed this day, and she no less forgot
That wreck upon the bar, the evil spot,
Red with a brother's blood, where long was stayed
The wrathful king as from the stream he weighed
The bleeding body of his well-loved son.
Lo in such wise their journey was begun,
And so began short love and long decay,
Sorrow that bides and joy that fleets away.

THE LEGEND OF ARIADNE

[The following story is modernized by Thomas Powell from Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, a series of love stories which he never completed.]

Minos, who was the mighty king of Crete,
And had a hundred cities strong and great,
To school hath sent his son Androgeus
At Athens, of the which it happened thus,—
That he was slain, learning philosophy
Right in that town, for hate and jealousy!

The puissant Minos, of the which I speak,
With wrath a-flame, comes all his rage to wreak,
And Alcatho besieged fiercely and long;
But ne'ertheless the walls were built so strong,
And Nisus, who was king of that brave town,
So chivalrous, and of so great renown,
That he for Minos and his warlike host
Caréd no more than if he had been a ghost.
Till on a day a strange adventure fell,
Of which I will, as short as may be, tell.
The daughter fair of Nisus stood upon
The lofty wall, to see the siege go on;
And looking at the gallant skirmishing,
She cast her heart on Minos, the great king:
And for his beauty and his chivalry
She longéd so, that she was like to die,
And, faithless to her sire, did on a day
To the besiegers this strong town betray.

Now all the town was at the conqueror's will,
To save whoe'er he list, or else to kill ;
But he requited ill her lovingness,
And let her drench in sorrow and distress,
Nor did the gods to her their pity show ;—
But this to tell, my tale too long would grow.
Now Athens did king Minos take alsó,
And other towns beside this Alcatho ;
And made them send their children year by year,
To be devoured, as ye shall after hear.

A monster had this Minos, and a beast
So cruel, that it could not be increased,
And whensoe'er a man before him came,
Naked or armed, him would he eat the same !
Now every third year, 'tis beyond all doubt,
They cast lots, as the season came about,
Both rich and poor ; for one his son must take,
And of his child a struggling offering make,
To Minos, that he might reject or kill,
Or let his beast devour him at his will ;
And this hath Minos done in his despite,
T' avenge his son was now his prime delight.

Now home he sailéd when this town was won :
This wicked custom had so long run on,
Till when in Athens, ruled king Egeus,
He must dispatch his dear son Theseus,
Since that the lot hath fallen upon him,
To be devouréd by this monster grim.
And forth is led this young and woeful knight
Unto the realm of Minos, full of might,
And in a prison he is chained right fast,
Till time was to the beast he should be cast !

Well mayst thou weep, O woeful Theseus !
To be a king's son, and yet treated thus,

Methinketh that thy love would be most great
To her who saved thee from so dread a fate :
And that if any maid gave help to thee,
Well mightest thou her servant long to be ;
Or else her lover, true and not to fail :

But now to come again to this sad tale !
The dungeon where Prince Theseus was thrown,
Was dark and low, and cold, and built of stone,
And was right near unto the palace wing
Where dwelt the two fair daughters of the King.
It happéd thus as Theseus by night
Bewailed his fate, and dreaded morning's light,
Fair Ariadne and her sister heard
In the night's silence every sorrowful word ;
While on a turret looking at the moon
They stood, not caring for their couch so soon ;
And they had sweet compassion on his woe,
For a king's son in prison thus to throw
To be devoured, begat their sympathy.

Then Ariadne her sister free,
And said—O sweetest Phædra, sister dear,
This woeful lord's son ye may plainly hear :
How piteously he mourneth his hard fate,
And groaneth o'er his sorrowful estate :—
Guiltless is he, ah ! certes, of the ruth,
And if ye will assist me, by my troth,
He shall be helped, whatever we may do.
And Phædra answered : Sister dear, I trow
I feel for him more than for any man,
And for his aid will do whate'er I can.
Let us the gaoler summon privily,
To come and speak with us right hastily,
And with him shall this woeful prisoner come ;
For if he may this monster overcome,
Then were he free, there is no other boot.
Let us well test him unto his heart's root,

That if he any deadly weapon have
Will he therewith his life fight for, and save,
And combat this strong fiend, or his life end ?
For as he in the prison shall descend,
Ye know right well, the beast is in a place
Which is not dark, and there is ample space
To wield an axe, or sword, a staff, or knife,
So that methinketh he shall save his life :
If that he be a man, he shall do so.
And we will make him many balls of tow
And eke of wax, that when he gapeth fast,
Down the beast's grisly throat he shall them cast,
To slake his hunger, and to blunt his teeth ;
And right anon, when valiant Theseus seeth
The beast a-choking, he shall on him leap
And slay him. Chains no more shall Theseus keep :
This weapon shall the gaoler at that tide,
Within the prison in some dark place hide ;
And as the house is guarded to and fro,
And hath so many curious windings too,
Thus quaintly by the skilful mason wrought ;
For this I have a remedy in thought ;
That by a clew of twine, as he hath gone,
By the same way he may return anon
By following the thread as he hath come.
And when this beast is fully overcome,
Then may he from his doleful prison flee,
And take the gaoler with him when he's free ;
So shall he come to his own home anon,
Since that he is so great a monarch's son !

This is my plan, if that you dare it take,
But why should I a longer sermon make ?
The gaoler came, and with him Theseus,
And then these things I tell, accorded thus :—
Adown sank Theseus upon his knee,
Ah ! sovran lady of my life, (quoth he)
I, sorrowful man, condemnéd unto death !

From you, while in me lasts my life and breath,
I will not part when this adventure's o'er,
But in your service live for evermore ;
Yea, as a man unknown your bidding tend
For ever till my heart in death shall end.
Forsake I will my royal heritage,
And, as I said, wait on you as a page,
If that ye deign to grant that in this place
I may enjoy your countenance and grace,
A little meat and drink is all I crave,
And for my sustenance will be your slave.
Minos your sire, nor any other wight,
E'er in their life, beheld me with their sight,
And no man else shall ere in me descry
That I am sprung from lineage so high ;
And to my kingly father will I send
This worthy gaoler, that hath been my friend ;
And for his guerdon straightway shall he be
One of the greatest men in my countree.
And if I durst say so, my lady bright,
I am a king's son and likewise a knight,
And would to God, if so that it might be,
We were in my own father's land, all three ;
And I with you to bear you company ;
Then would ye see if that I thereof lie.
Again I proffer you in lowly guise
To be your page and live beneath your eyes,
Serving you lowly in whatever place ;
And pray to Mars to give me such a grace
That may a shameful death upon me fall
And death and poverty to my dear friends all ;
And that my spirit through the night may go
After my death, and wander to and fro,
If I should ever earn a traitor's name,
And bring upon my knighthood grief and shame.

A seemly knight was Theseus to see,
And young, his age was twenty years and three ;

And whosoe'er had seen his comely face,
He would have wept at his distressful case.
Then Ariadne answered in this wise
To his request, while tears fell from her eyes :—

A King's son art thou, and a knight (quoth she),
To be my servant is so low degree !
God shield me, for the shame of women all,
That on me such a sorrow should befall,
And send you grace, and strength of heart alsó,
Knight-like to guard yourself and slay your foe :
And grant hereafter that I may you find,
To me, and to my sister here, so kind,
That I repent not that I saved your life.
Yet it were better I should be your wife,
Since that you be as gently born as I,
And have a kingdom of your own fast by,
Than that I suffered knightly blood to wait,
And be my page to swell my father's state,—
This would not profit me, nor your friends dear,
That you should wait upon a lady here—
But what will not man do when urged by fear ?—
No ! let us rather altogether go,
You, and eke I, my gentle sister too,
And let her to some noble lord be wed :
This is what I propose ; (the lady said)
Now swear it here, on all that can be sworn.

O, lady mine, (quoth he) or else all torn
May I be with the Minotaur to-morrow,
And have here of my heart its blood and sorrow,
If that ye will : had I a knife or spear,
Forth would I let it gush, and thereon swear
By red-eyed Mars, chief god of my belief,
So may I live, nor fail by foe or grief,—
To-morrow with the monster will I fight ;
So shall your faith my promise then requite ;

For I would never from my dungeon flee
Till that you should my proofs of true love see.
For, O, believe the gentle words I say,
That I have loved you long full many a day ;
Tho' little wist thou, in my own countree ;
And evermost have I desired to see
You above every other creature fair.
Upon my truth I you assure, and swear,
These seven years your servant I have been :—
Now am I yours, and also you are mine ;
Of Athens Duchess, and my dear heart's queen !

The lady at his ardour smiled serene,
And at his hearty words, and at his cheer ;
And to her sister said as ye shall hear.

Oh, gentle sister mine ! dear heart ! (quoth she)
Now are we duchesses of high degree,
And trothed to sceptred rulers of Athénes,
And both hereafter likely to be queens,
And saved from shameful death a monarch's son,
May ever gentle woman thus be won—
To save a gentle man, and show her might
In honest causes, that is, in the right :
And well I deem no tongue can ever blame
Our deeds, nor give to us an evil name.
But of this tale I must short matter make,
And therefore Theseus soon his leave did take,
And every point arranged performed indeed.
As ye have in this story heard me read.
The sword and clew, the things that I have said,
Were by the gaoler in the prison laid,
There where the Minotaur was wallowing,
Close to the door, and by the entering ;
And Theseus is led unto his doom,
And to the monster's dwelling is he come.
Then, by the teaching of the lady bright,
He overcame the beast in dreadful fight ;

And out he cometh by the clew again,
Full secretly, when he the beast has slain.
And the old gaoler taketh then a barge,
And filled it with his lady's treasure large,
And took her thence, and eke her sister free :
And now the gaoler, and with him all three,
Are stole away out of the land by night,
And to a foreign shore they took their flight,
Where Theseus had a friend, who bade him rest,
And there they sang, and feasted on the best.
Then for a noble barge he sent anon ;
The crew his country-folks were every one ;
And Theseus took his leave, and home sailed he,
Till coming to an isle in the wild sea,
Where living creatures therein dwelleth none
Save wild beasts, and of them full many a one,
He made his ship towards this island steer,
And there a summer's day he had his cheer.

But now, to tell you in the shortest way,
As Ariadne fast in slumber lay,
Because her sister fairer was than she,
By the hand Theseus took her silently,
Unto his rocking ship, and bade the crew
Across the deep their traitorous flight pursue,
And homeward to his country sailed full fast,
With twenty devils driving in the blast,—
And found his father drowned in the salt sea.
False lover ! may thy poison work on thee.

And now for Ariadne let us weep,
Who for her very weariness doth sleep.
Full woefully will she from slumbers wake :
Alas ! for her my heart with ruth doth ache.
Right in the dawning of the day she woke,
And groping in the bed began to look,
But Theseus saw not ; then aloud she said,

Alas ! alas ! that ever I was made !
I am forsaken ;—and her hair she rent,
And to the beach in barefoot haste she went,
And cried aloud, O Theseus ! my heart's dear,
Where art thou, that I cannot find thee here ?
Full soon shall I by these wild beasts be slain !
The hollow rocks now answered her again.
No man she saw, and yet bright shone the moon,
When high upon a rock she clambered soon,
And saw his barge a-sailing on the sea !
Cold turned her heart, and thus in grief said she ;
Kinder than thou I find the beasts so wild !
Hath he not sinned that hath her thus beguiled ?
Again she cried, O, turn for ruth and sin,
Thy barge hath not got all its people in.
Her kerchief on a pole then sticketh she,
High in the air, that he the sign must see,
Remembering him that she was left behind,
And turn again his once-loved wife to find.
But all for nought ; his path-way is far gone,
And down she fell and swoonéd on a stone ;
But after a time she rose, and kissed with care
His footmarks on the sand which she found there,
And to her bed in accents mild and low,
Thou bed, (quoth she) that hath receivéd two,
Answer thou shalt for two, and not for one—
Where is the greater part, and whither gone ?
Alas ! what shall I, wretched wight, become ?
For tho' it chance a boat should hither come,
Home to my country dare I never go,
Myself I cannot counsel in my woe.

What should I more of her complaining tell,
It were a heavy thing whereon to dwell ;
In his epistle Ovid telleth all :
But shortly to the end my words shall fall.
The thronéd gods on her their pity took,
And in the sign of Taurus, if you look,

You may behold her starry crown shine clear.
Now will I speak no more of sorrow here ;
But thus this traitorous lover did beguile
A gentle heart ; the devil requite his wile.

APPENDIX

LITERARY EXERCISES

Perseus

1. Many names are mentioned in this story. Make a short list of the most important.
2. What are the high points or crises of the story?
3. Try to put the story of Halcyone and Ceyx into verse (page 17); also the speech of Pallas (page 21).
4. How did the Old Greeks educate boys? (page 20).
5. Tennyson spoke once of a worker receiving "the wages of going on." Find a similar idea on page 26.
6. Dramatize the interview of Perseus with Athené (pages 26–29).
7. Using a map of the Mediterranean seaboard, try to trace, in a general way, the adventurous journey of Perseus.
8. How was the prayer of Perseus answered (pages 41, 42)?
9. What was it which put fear into the heart of Perseus?
10. What is the most exciting moment on pages 46 to 47?
11. Detail from the story of Perseus the qualities of a Grecian hero.

The Argonauts

12. Try to put the song of Cheiron into verse.
13. Choose the leading names from the first five chapters of this story.
14. Compare the picture on page 67 with the story.
15. Whom do you prefer, Perseus or Jason, and why?

16. What share had Cheiron, the schoolmaster, in the taking of the Golden Fleece ?

17. Put into verse the speech of Orpheus (pages 74 and 75), and his song on pages 79 and 80.

18. Find a " tense moment " on pages 85, 86.

19. Find a good word-picture on page 88.

20. Do you find any part of this story tedious ? If so, which part ?

21. Who had greater help from the immortals, Perseus or Jason ?

22. What are the high points or crises of this story ?

23. Compare the motives of Perseus and Jason.

24. Trace, as far as you can, on a map of Europe the wanderings of the *Argo*. The exact geography does not matter, but you may be able to get a general idea. Colchis is supposed to have lain between the Black Sea and the Caucasus ; Iolcos, to have been a town in Thessaly.

25. Make verses from one of the paragraphs of page 106.

26. Put Medeia's song into verse (page 120).

27. Which do you consider the most surprising of all the adventures of the Argonauts ?

Theseus

28. Compare Aithra with Danae.

29. What good influence was missing from the boyhood of Jason which Perseus and Theseus enjoyed ?

30. How did the adventures of Theseus help other people ?

31. What is the crisis in the story of Procrustes ?

32. Find in the story of Jason a parallel to the incident of Theseus and the old man with the faggot.

33. Why was Daidalos, the inventor, " unlovely and accursed by men " ?

34. Which of the three stories has the happiest ending?

Andromeda

35. Find and read the prose story of Andromeda in the tale of Perseus. Compare the facts of both stories.

36. Whether do you prefer the prose or the verse story, and why ?

37. Find lines on page 174 which express sense by sound.

38. Study the number of syllables and the accents in the lines of this poem, and compare them with those of the next extract.

The Rescue of Andromeda

39. Compare Morris's version of this story with that of Kingsley, pointing out differences in details.

40. Which of the two verse stories do you prefer ?

The Sailing of the Argo

41. Refer back to the prose story of the sailing of the *Argo*.

42. Why does the length of line change on page 218 ?

43. Would the story of the opening lines of this extract make a good film ?

Jason's Tasks

44. Compare this extract with Kingsley's prose version.

45. What is the highest point of this story ?

The Taking of the Fleece

46. Compare Medea's presentiment of evil (page 229) with the end of Kingsley's prose tale.

47. What do you consider the crisis of this story ?

48. Compare Kingsley's reference to the death of Absyrtus with that of Morris. Why was this event so important ?

The Legend of Ariadne

49. Compare Chaucer's story with that of Kingsley.

PRONOUNCING LIST OF PROPER NAMES

The following table shows the usual English pronunciation which is sanctioned by long usage rather than authority or scientific precision.

Absyrtus, *ab-sir'-tus*
Abydos, *a-by'-dos*
Acharnai, *a-kar'-nai* or *a-kar'-nē*
Achelous, *ak-e-lo'-us*
Ægeus, *e-je'-us*
Æneas, *e-ne'-as*
Aiantes, *ē-an'-tes* or *ī-an'-tes*
Aietes, *ē-e'-tes* or *ī-e'-tes*
Aithra, *e'-thra* or *ah-eth'-ra*
Alcinous, *al-sin'-o-us*
Amphitrite, *am-phi-tri'-te*
Androgeos, *an-dro'-je-os*
Aphidnai, *a-fid'-ne* or *a-fid'-nai*
Aphrodite, *af-ro-di'-te*
Ariadne, *ar-i-ad'-ne*
Asclepius, *as-cle'-pi-us*
Athene, *ath-e'-ne*

Bacchæ, *bak'-ke*
Bellerophon, *bel-ler'-of-on*
Bœotia, *be-o'-shi-a*
Butes, *bu'-tes*

Cæneus, *se-neus*
Calais, *kal'-a-is*
Calliope, *kal-li'-o-pe*
Cassiopeia, *kas-si-o-pe'-ya*
Cassiterides, *cas-si-ter'-i-des*
Cepheus, *sef'-eus*
Cephisus, *sef-i'-sus*
Cercyon, *ser'-shi-on*
Ceyx, *seeks*
Chalciope, *kal-si'-o-pe*
Chalybes, *kal'-ib-es*
Charybdis, *kar-ib'-dis*
Cheiron, *ki'-ron*
Chersonese, *ker-son-ees'*
Chimæra, *ki-mē'-ra*
Cicon, *si'-kon*
Circe, *sir'-se*
Corynetes, *ko-ry-nē'-tes*
Cyclades, *sy'-clad-es*
Cyclopes, *sy'-clop-es*
Cyrene, *sy-re'-ne*
Cyzicus, *sy'-si-cus*

Daidalos, *daed'-a-lus*
Danae, *dan'-a-e*
Demeter, *de-mē'-ter*
Dictys, *dik'-tus*
Dionysos, *di-on-y'-sos*
Dioscuri, *di-os-ku'-ri*

Echinades, *e-kin'-a-des*
Enceladus, *en-sel'-a-dus*
Erinnyes, *e-rin'-ny-es*
Euripus, *eu-rip'-us*
Euristheus, *eu-ris'-theus*
Eurydice, *eu-rid'-i-se*

Geryon, *ger'-e-on*

Halcyone, *hal-se'-on-e*
Helle, *hel'-le*
Hellenes, *hel-le'-nes*
Hellespont, *hel'-les-pont*

Hephaistos, *hef-ēs'-tos* or *hef-ais'-tos*
Hera, *hē'-ra*
Heracles, *her'-a-cles*
Hermes, *her'-mes*
Hermione, *her-mī'-o-ne*
Herpe, *her'-pe*
Hesperides, *hes-per'-id-es*
Hippolyte, *hip-pol'-i-te*
Hylas, *hī'-las*
Hyperborei, *hy-per-bor'-e-ī*

Icarus, *ic'-a-rus*
Idalian, *i-da'-li-an*
Ierne, *e-er'-ne*
Iobates, *i-ob'-a-tes*
Iolaus, *i-o-la'-us*

Kekrops, *kek'-rops*
Kerkuon, *ker'-ku-on*

Lacedæmon, *las-e-dē'-mon*
Lapithai, *lap'-i-thē* or *lap'-i-thai*
Lucomedes, *lu-ko-me'-des*

Medeia, *me-de'-a*
Megara, *meg'-a-ra*
Meleager, *me-le-ā'-ger*
Minos, *mi'-nos*
Minotaur, *min'-o-taur*
Mycenae, *my-se'-ne*
Mysian, *mish'-i-an*

Neleus, *nē'-l͡eus*

Odysseus, *o-dys'-s͡eus*
Odyssey, *od'-ys-se*
Oileus, *o-ī'-l͡eus*
Orchomenus, *or-kom'-en-us*
Orpheus, *or'-f͡eus*

Peirithoos, *pei-rith'-o-os*
Pelias, *pē'-li-as*
Peloponnese, *pel-o-pon-nesē'*
Peloponnesus, *pel-o-pon-nēs'-us*
Penelope, *pe-nel'-o-pe*
Peneus, *pe-nē'-us*
Persephone, *per-sef'-o-ne*
Perseus, *per'-s͡eus*
Phæaces, *fē-a'-ces*
Phasian, *fāsh'-i-an*
Phia, *fe'-a*
Phineus, *fin'-ē͡us*
Pittheus, *pit'-th͡eus*
Polydectes, *pol-y-dec'-tes*
Polydeuces, *pol-y-deu'-ces* or *pol-y-deu'-kes*
Poseidon, *pos-ei'-don*
Prometheus, *pro-mē'-th͡eus*
Psylli, *sil'-li*

Rhodope, *rhod'-o-pe*

Sauromati, *sau-rom'-a-tī*
Sciathos, *si'-a-thos*
Sciron, *si'-ron*
Semele, *sem'-e-le*
Seriphos, *se-rī'-fos*
Sinope, *si-no'-pe*
Socrates, *sok'-ra-tes*

Telamon, *tel'-a-mon*
Telemachus, *te-lem'-a-kus*
Tempe, *tem'-pe*
Teutamenes, *teu-ta'-men-es*
Thermopylæ, *ther-mop'-y-le*
Theseus, *thē'-s͡eus*
Thriasian, *thri-ā'-shi-an*
Tiphys, *tif'-ūs*
Tiryns, *ti'-rins*
Triptolemus, *trip-tol'-e-mus*
Trœzene, *trē-zē'-ne*

Zeus, *z͡eus*.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS


1708


1798